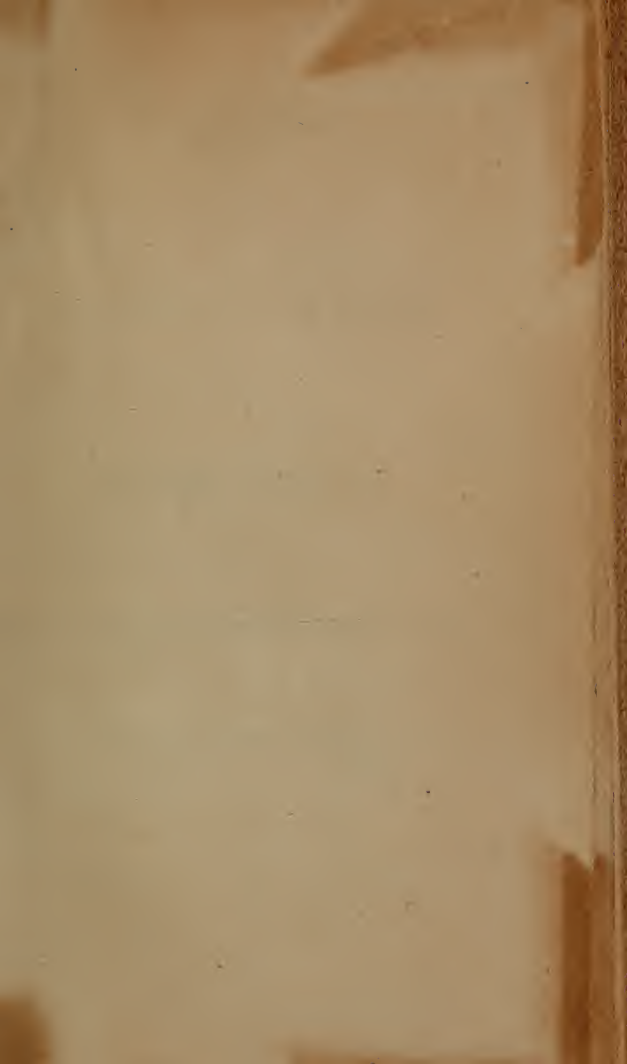


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NARRATIVE
AND
REFLECTIONS
OF
JUSTIN WELLS.

COMPILED FROM MANUSCRIPTS WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

FOURTH THOUSAND.

BOSTON:
PUBLISHED FOR THE PROPRIETOR,
BY C. H. PEIRCE.

1852.

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37

PREFACE.

THE author of this narrative is an invalid. More than eighteen years since, he became the victim of disease, which has produced a perfect and total paralysis of all the muscles of volition. A slight motion of the head and body is all of which he is capable. The faculties of the mind and the vocal organs remain unimpaired. In such a state of helplessness he has written this volume, by having the manuscript laid on a frame attached to the front of his chair, and holding the pen in his teeth, as represented in the engraving.

It has been a slow and laborious work, confining him more than a year to almost incessant toil.

It is now offered to the public, with the hope that it may be rendered a blessing to many; and that the sufferer may derive some pecuniary aid in his affliction.

The author is aware that so strange a method of writing will appear incredible; hence, the following

certificates, proffered by respectable gentlemen of the town of Colchester, Connecticut, — the place of his residence, — are here inserted.

I hereby certify, that I have visited Mr. Justin Wells, a man afflicted as he states, and wholly deprived of the use of his limbs. I have also seen him write, by holding his pen with his teeth, in a slow and toilsome way, and am fully persuaded that he can write in no other, not being able to use arms, or hands, or feet, in any degree whatever.

ALBERT F. PARK,

Pastor of the M. E. Church in Colchester.

COLCHESTER, CONN., Aug. 19, 1850.

I hereby certify that I have seen Mr. Justin Wells write. I know that his manner of holding a pen is as represented in the accompanying engraving, and that all his writing is done in the same way, — he not having the least use of his hands.

J. B. WHEELER.

COLCHESTER, CONN., AUG. 15, 1850.

CHAPTER I.

“Lulled in the countless chambers of the brain,
Our thoughts are linked by many a hidden chain;
Awake but one, and lo! what myriads rise —
Each stamps its image as the other flies.
Each, as the varied avenues of sense
Delight or sorrow to the soul dispense,
Brightens or fades; yet all, with magic art,
Control the latent fibres of the heart.”

THE delightful and romantic town of Hebron, Conn., is hallowed in memory as the place of my birth, and the scenes of my early youth. Of all others, that spot is invested with perennial joys and unfading bliss. It is consecrated by the gambols of childhood, and the nurture of tender age. The voices of my playmates, and the wild fancies of youth, are there. It was there I chased the gay butterfly in the fields, lis-

tened to the gay notes of birds, and plucked the blooming flowers, to inhale their fragrance. Like a dream when the morning is come, the scenes of home now all rush upon the mind. And thither, when age has mantled my temples with the hoar-frosts of time, shall I delight, with these palsied limbs, to repair, and sit down among the graves of those I love, and weep. There, in the buoyancy of youthful hope, the future spread out its vast panorama of pleasure, usefulness, and delight. Its unexplored regions, its ample fields, and beautiful groves, which were to be traversed in my coming threescore years and ten, were to me all that poetry could describe in imagery, or pencil paint in fancy. The sportive scenes of childhood were but the vestibule through which I must pass to the inner temple of experience and usefulness. And how has my little heart panted with glowing enthusiasm and ardent longings, when thinking

of the future! The future—that mysterious book, of which but a page, a sentence, a line, is disclosed at once, and which, as disclosed, often blights our fairest prospects, destroys our most sanguine hopes, and chills our most blissful expectations.

An unbroken group was ours. A father who had a father's heart, a mother who lived only for her loved ones, four warm-hearted brothers, and two lovely sisters, together with myself, the elder, constituted our happy circle. Providence dealt but sparingly with her temporal gifts; yet did no splendid mansion, with luxury loaded table, afford more affectionate or happy hearts. Poverty, however, with its lean and haggard and filthy face, was not a resident or guest within our humble home; for blessings procured by the honest, industrious labor of a father, with the frugal care and unspotted neatness of a mother, gave an aspect of comfort and easy independence to

our lowly habitation. Many buildings of beautiful architecture, costly material, and imposing aspect, would be passed by the traveller with less pleasure and interest than our jessamine cottage; for the ivy and honeysuckle, the morning-glory, and humble violet, together with a great variety of the poor man's horticultural specimens, were abundantly profuse. Exotics rich, dahlias, cactuses, and geraniums, would have as illy become our home, as jewels on a beggar's gown. But Nature, always lavish, always kind, supplied their place; and, trained by the tasteful hand of mother, our cottage garden was filled with humble flowers, which perfumed the atmosphere with what was to us almost celestial fragrance.

Thus sweetly passed twelve happy years, — years of unsullied bliss — of pleasure unalloyed. How swiftly did they speed! And though the glowing aspirations of youth would have fain transported me to the time

when I should be a man; yet so peaceful, so tranquil, was our home, gladly would I have remained there until time had silvered my locks, furrowed my cheeks, palsied my limbs; and there, in that loved spot, laid me down to die. My ardent longings for coming usefulness and honor would have quietly resigned their position to the stronger love of home. Life then was as a summer's day, in whose sunbeam I sported as playfully as the insect on its tiny wing,—as an unruffled sea, upon whose smooth and tranquil surface I reposed, unmindful of clouds or storms,—as the pleasant day-dream of an excited fancy, upon whose pinions I soared in ecstasy,—as the clear, cloudless sunlight of one constant, ever-during day.

But alas! this bright summer's day was followed by a long and gloomy night,—a night without moon or stars,—a night upon which the sun has not risen for weeks, for months, for years. This calm, unruffled

sea has been lashed to a dreadful storm, and the tempest dashed its fury against my frail bark, almost to its perishing. This fanciful day-dream has become, in its opposite, a sad reality, and life, by adversity's chill blasts, become a dreary waste, — a wilderness of sorrow and of grief. I have found this to be a mixed world; — a world of joy and sorrow; a world of prosperity and adversity; a world of health and disease; a world of life and death. O, ye who have dreamed of nought but shady paths, and sunny scenes, and bubbling springs, and placid seas, and gentle zephyrs, will find yourselves deceived, as the events of life come on! The cup of which you drink is a mingled one; the path in which you tread alike yields thorns and flowers. Enjoyment, says one, is indestructible; and were it not for this, how little of pleasure would be mingled in my cup! Forty-two years have fled since first I saw the light; and oh! did

not memory recall those twelve bright years of early youth, drear indeed would be the retrospect. Sunny spots, oases in my life's landscape, "are like angels' visits, few and far between." But often now, while this emaciated frame and useless limbs are racked with pain, do I repair to my once blissful home. Again the happy group is met; the voices of those I love most on earth are stealing with heaven's own music on my ear, and, fresh with youthful vigor and glowing hope, I seem to live again in the bright visions of the past.

CHAPTER II.

"O love! thy visitings of earth are ever, ever brief,
As summer's evanescent flowers, or autumn's fading leaf;
We clasp thee to our throbbing hearts, and wildly, vainly cling
To cherished idol-forms of clay, — frail, fragile, withering."

BUT a change has come over the spirit of my dream. My pen almost refuses to perform its office, and gladly would I blot from my mind's tablet the mysterious event which proved destructive to earth's enjoyments, and severed the links which so closely bound our circle.

After an absence of a few weeks from home, I started, one fine afternoon, to return. My route lay through the midst of one of the loveliest of New England's many lovely scenes. Far below, on their ocean-ward journey, danced the clear waters of the ma-

jestic Connecticut, glittering in the sun of that October sky, and sweeping around as if they loved to linger in the soft bosom of those merry green hills. Far in the distance, and on all sides, rose an amphitheatre of hills, and gently swelling mountains, spotted with beautiful farms, and crowned with their woody crests, rising tier above tier, and stretching away until they seemed to cut the azure canopy of heaven. The hours flew swiftly by, for, though a boy, I had a soul that could feel the beauties of nature. The sun, which thus far had been riding through a cloudless sky, was just sinking in the west. Filled with emotions of sublimity and love, while gazing on this magnificent scene, I thought of heaven, the home of the blessed, and, by association, of my own loved home — the bosom of my earthly joys.

Just then the paternal dwelling met my gaze. The cottage gate is opened for my reception. The voices of merry ones greet

my ear, and I am within the loved precincts of home. Anxious inquiries concerning health and enjoyment are proffered by her who gave me birth. But the appearance of all around was altered. In the place of the beaming intelligence and glowing affection of a mother, appeared alternately the down-cast look and the vacant stare, indicating a saddened heart and a bewildered mind. I was not yet versed in the philosophy of mind, and knew not how to interpret the change; but it chilled my youthful heart, and in perplexity I retired to rest. On the succeeding morning, I arose with the dawn of the genial light, and descending the stairs, the first object that met my gaze was mother. She ran with violence, — clasped me in her arms, and, with convulsive grasp and choked utterance, breathed forth an incoherent, agonizing prayer to God, for the preservation of her first-born son. “O God, save, oh save and care for this my boy when I am gone!”

Bewildered, I gazed upon her as she loosed her hold, and the fearful truth was disclosed by the wild glare of those eyes, accustomed only to beam with affection and love, — my mother was a maniac! And who can describe all that fearful word imports? — bereft of reason — that noble faculty, that offspring of Deity, that which gives dignity to man, and clothes him with a limited omnipotence. That principle was dethroned, and in its dethronement all that constituted a mother was lost.

But though madness had seized her brain, still did maternal affection outlive the wreck of mind, and anxiety for her offspring exceed all other. Who can tell the depths of a mother's heart! Her affection knows no ebbing tide. It flows on from a pure fountain, spreading happiness through all this vale of tears, and ceases only at the ocean of eternity. It has no semblance on earth. It is deeper, stronger, purer, than any other.

It cannot be measured, fathomed, or illustrated. It is not exhausted by the advance of years. It dries not up because not reciprocated, but gushes forth when it meets no return. It is innate with her very being, — it glows early and late, — it never tires or decays. It is almost the essence of her very life. And is there no design in this? Why this deep, this unquenchable, inexpressible love, in a mother's heart? O, it is to her maternal care that Providence has intrusted an immaterial, immortal being! Enclosed within these mortal caskets are gems of purest ray — of undying worth. A pearl of precious material is hers to purify, — a diamond of the richest water is hers to increase in brilliancy, — a jewel, designed to deck the Saviour's crown, is hers to guard. Within these feeble ones are the beginnings of undying life, — the buddings of celestial exotics, — the blossoms of paradise. Then, mothers, forget not your duty! When you feel

for your child the warm gushings of affection, remember, God has placed it there to enable you to discharge the important trust committed to you, — to sustain your fainting heart, as it hangs over the cradle of affliction, — to give keenness to that eye which watches the erring footsteps of wayward youth, and fire to those lips which utter a mother's prayer. A holy but responsible calling is yours, and often you feel to convert the poetical effusions of Willis into sentiments and feelings of your own :

“I sadden when thou smilest to my smile,
Child of my love! I tremble to believe
That o'er the mirror of that eye of blue
The shadow of my heart will always pass, —
A heart that from its struggle with the world
Comes often to thy guarded cradle home,
And, careless of the staining dust it brings,
Asks for its idol. Strange that flowers of earth
Are visited by every air that stirs,
And drink in sweetness only, while the child
That shuts within its breast a bloom for heaven
May take a blemish from the breath of love,
And bear the blight forever.

“ I have wept

With gladness at the gift of this fair child, —
My life is bound up in her. But, oh God !
Thou know'st how heavily my heart at times
Bears its sweet burden ; and if thou hast given
To nurture such as thine, this spotless flower,
And bring it unpolluted unto thee,
Take thou its love, I pray thee, give it light,
Though, following the sun, it turn from me.
But by the chord thus wrung, and by the light
Shining about her, draw me to my child,
And link us close, oh God ! when near to heaven.”

CHAPTER III.

"He who directs our fate, disperses oft,
In empty air, the purest wish we breathe
After some golden image of delight,
And sets a labyrinth where we would walk.
Deep in the distance of eternity God sees."

You will observe, in that never-to-be-forgotten prayer of mother, she added what was seemingly almost a prophetic declaration. After imploring the care of Heaven upon her boy, she added, "when I am gone." She seemed to feel that soon she should lie down to die; and oh, how fearful was her death! — not of body, for she still lives, a wreck of her former self. Thirty long years have fled since one ray of reason's sun has darted athwart her pathway, and still an all-wise Providence withholds that precious boon. Calmly and quietly does she now

await her last great change. The turbulent frenzy, which for years controlled her acts, is lulled to a quiet repose; and, with idiotic cheerfulness, she amuses herself with the baubles of a child, or the idle fancies and illusions of the bewildered adult. But how much less saddening this state or species of insanity, than that which seems to leave the light of the intellect dimly burning in the chambers of the brain, while dark shadows have fallen upon the moral feelings and perceptions of the sufferer, and the heart, out of which are "the issues of life," becomes embittered, or filled with vanity and vexation of spirit.

But from either case the mind instinctively shrinks with dread. The historian may describe the decay of empires, the wasting of kingdoms, the falling of diadems, and the desolation of a land swept by war, pestilence and famine;—the poet may image a heart swollen and bursting with the grief

of bereavement, the sighing and wailing of earth, making audible the elastic air of heaven; — nay, the ecclesiastic may portray death itself, in all its gloominess, and in all its dreadfulness; but nothing presents to me so melancholy an aspect as *a mind in ruins!* What a scene! What heart will not revolt at the sight! Reason cut loose from her anchorings; the imagination filled with unearthly images; sensation fled; perception enfeebled; consciousness stupefied; memory obliterated, and conscience paralyzed, and the complicated machinery of the mind taken in pieces and scattered upon the waves, to drift into the unknown seas of an uncontrolled fancy, or lie becalmed in idiocy!

Mind is the glory of man, and reason the glory of mind; but, if divested of this, he is weaker than helpless infancy. The veiling of the sun and the blotting out of the stars would fail to enwrap him in such thick

darkness. But, from its immateriality, and the light which revelation sheds, we learn that mind is immortal, — not subject to the decays of nature, nor capable of being destroyed by the calamities of earth. The shattered fragments of a mind in ruins shall be again collected, adjusted and balanced, by that hand which formed it at first. The body may be decomposed, but the mind survives the wreck. Matter may perish, but mind shall endure.

The ice-bound north, with its crystal cities, may crush the frail body; the entombed fires of the volcano may burst from their caverns, and a fiery sea roll over cities of life; the spirit of the storm may shriek in fancy's ear, and the confused elements join in a requiem over desolation's march; and, as the tornado sweeps on, and the red lightning's wrath adds terror to the scene, and life after life yields to the wild revel of the elements; — though frenzy and despair,

with all their hideous train of concomitants, assume even here the dominion of the mind; — though all these agencies, and ten thousand more, may conspire to blot man from his earthly abode, — mind lives on, vigorous and active, unharmed and immortal as its all-glorious Creator!

We are not always able to connect events with their hidden causes; especially in the phenomena of mind, — it is a substance so subtle, and so intimately and mysteriously connected with that which is material; yet some evidences of the origin of insanity, and other diseases of this principle, are often discernible.

In the case of mother, it was occasioned without any predisposition, produced either by hereditary descent or physical derangement. She had been brought by the power of that Spirit which “enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world,” about four weeks previous, to see herself guilty

before God, — a criminal at his bar, and condemned to death. And by the aid of that Spirit, she beheld a substitute in the sacrifice of the Son of God. With sincere and heart-felt sorrow, she bewailed her offences and guilt; with humble confidence and believing trust, she laid hold on the vicariousness of that substitute, and felt its efficacy in the removal of the burdensome load of guilt which had crushed her to the earth. I was not at home, and did not see the change produced; but those who were familiar with her at the time speak of it as a most blissful transition. Naturally possessed of an ardent, happy and peaceful temperament, — always pleasant and always pleased, — wearing an air of contented cheerfulness, which sat undisturbed upon her brow, — there could not be such an evident change as in some persons; for joyousness was her characteristic. But the beauty of the change was in the sanctification of this

contentment, and the raising of her desires and hopes from earth to heaven. Before, all her happiness was earth-born; now, it savored of immortality. Before, it breathed only the labored and short-lived gaspings of humanity; now, divinity was linked with all its life. Her immortal spirit could no longer feed on mortal's food, though ever so daintily prepared. She felt and knew the contrast between earthly and heavenly hope. Earth-born hopes could, indeed, for a season, alleviate the difficulties of life, and open to view fresh scenes of comfort in the near future; but she knew full well that it lured but to bewilder, and dazzled but to blind, — that it was mortal and must soon die. But now, with Heaven's own aspiring hope, she looked beyond the narrow stream of time. This life was but the outer court her feet must tread to enter within the upper sanctuary; this but the stepping-stone to a glorious immortality; this but the dress-

ing-chamber in which she lays aside the vestments of sinful mortality, and puts on the robe of eternal righteousness. With this blissful prospect, she exultingly and triumphantly gave glory to the Lamb. Never, perhaps, did sinful mortal experience a higher state of holy joy, when first regenerated. But alas! her bliss was of short duration.

The prevailing religion of the day was that system which elects and reprobates the race of man, and which denies every aspiring certainty of acceptance with God. Her experience was of such a nature that she *knew* she had passed from death unto life, and spoke with confident assurance of her change. On being visited by a worthy clergyman, who held the above tenets, she, in the sanguineness of her first love, confidently expressed her acceptance; when he checked her ardor by expressing a doubt of the possibility of this knowledge; and though we

might esteem ourselves among the elect, still we might be among the reprobates.

Her companion, my father, was one of the kindest of husbands and fathers, — lenient to a fault, and kind-hearted to a degree that bordered on unlimited indulgence. He was not, however, a pious or religious man; — one of the world, without God or hope, and whose religious belief was in the universal salvation of guilty man; — and, as is usual with those professing that system, secretly despised the operations of the Spirit of God upon the heart. He gently suggested some few absurdities, as he was disposed to esteem them, in the Christian system, and quoted some passages of Scripture which were to him conclusive arguments in favor of his much-loved theory. Mother was accustomed to esteem his opinion highly, and her affection prompted her to deem his suggestions worthy of attention.

Soon the conflicting opinions of her hus-

band and pastor, and her own experience, became the all-absorbing subject of her meditations, until that peaceful consciousness of believing, confiding trust in the Redeemer, gradually disappeared, and gloomy darkness enshrouded her spirit. Now she contrasted this gloom with the peaceful sunlight serenity which had been her experience a few short days previous, and with the painful contrast came the settled conviction that she was either among the eternally reprobated, or had grieved the spirit of that love which had so mercifully saved her from the ponderous guilt of sin; that that blessed dove had plumed its wings, taken its flight, and left her in the dark; and with this conviction, despair, with its raven wings, brooded over her spirit, and a mental chaos of long, long years succeeded.

And here I might enlarge on the responsible relation of husband and wife. Infinite the influence exerted, each over the other.

Their interests undivided, how natural that a power unlimited over each other's destiny should be coëxistent with their relation ! Then beware how you make the affection you bear the basis of an argument to decoy the soul from God ! Eternity, with all its solemn realities, is often legitimately affected by this relation.

3*

CHAPTER IV.

*" Providence, that ever-seeing eye,
Looks down with pity on the feeble toil
Of mortals lost to hope, and lights them safe
Through all this dreary labyrinth of fate."*

To resume my narrative: this was the last time we ever met in a family group. Home, with all its loved associations and holy joys, was now destroyed. The main-spring of its mechanism was broken. The key which disclosed its treasures was lost. The girdle which encircled it was broken, and all of which it was composed scattered to strangers' homes, to strangers' hearths, and to strangers' hearts. Time wore away, and brought in its course some transient gleams of sunshine and of joy. Childhood, so elastic, could not be strained by sorrow to its utmost tension, and there remain; but,

springing back to its accustomed cheerfulness, brought happiness of an evanescent kind. Homes where abundance supplied the meal, and benevolent kindness sat as master round the loaded table and happy hearth, a kind Providence provided for each sorrowing one. Occasional meetings of two or three of our little group gave a higher zest and keener relish to our pleasures. Some of our circle were adopted by warm and loving hearts, and shared the sympathies of kindly affection and glowing love. Being the elder, and able to earn my bread by daily toil, I never knew again the pleasures of a home. True, I always lived among those who seemed to have a care for the lonely one; but, however pleasant, it was not home. And here I would remark to those who shelter other than their own cherished ones, speak kindly to that heart, for kindness will heal its wounds, and be as balm upon its wounded spirit. Let that golden precept be bound as

an amulet about your hearts: "Whatsoever ye would have others do to you, do ye even so to them." Did you realize, as one who has experienced and felt its power, the veneration, gratitude and love, that will ever be yours, you surely would aim at kindness and considerate care. One who has in a stranger's circle experienced the blessings of a home, will, down to the last hour of life, hold the master of that house in grateful remembrance. If prosperity attend his pathway, and he become, by a kind Providence, among the great of earth, that kindness will be ever in memory's storehouse stored. If adversity be his portion, he will look back to that habitation as one of the greener spots of earth. The retrospect will be pleasing, and the mention of any of that family will send a thrill of grateful pleasure through the soul, and call forth associations of a delightful kind. O! the magic power of kindness, that practical essence of love! A

charm encircles it of brighter halo than all earth's honors. To know and feel the power of kindness is heaven.

“Nought is seen
More beautiful, or excellent, or fair,
Than face of faithful friend, fairest when seen
In darkest day. And many sounds were sweet,
Most ravishing and pleasant to the ear,
But sweeter none than voice of faithful friend,
Sweet always, sweetest heard in loudest storm.
Some I remember, and will ne'er forget,
My early friends — friends of my evil day,
Friends in my mirth, friends in my misery too,
Friends given by God in mercy and in love.”

How lovely is kindness, and how great its benefits upon the stricken ones of earth! Nought else so akin to heaven is dispensed so cheaply, — is so beneficial. It imparts mutual blessings. It blesseth him that gives, and him that receives. Man thrives by nourishing his fellow-man. God has designed that every gift of his should be twice blessed, — that it should circulate through

society, and be elastic as the breath of heaven. And for the encouragement of this virtue, God has established it as a fixed principle in his moral government, that “whatever a man soweth that shall he also reap;” — a principle that may be seen in operation throughout all the circles of society. He who shuts up his bowels of compassion, shall receive no compassion. He who refuseth to show mercy, shall receive no mercy. He that is benevolent, shall reap benevolence; and he that is affectionate and kind, shall reap affection and kindness. O! if this law were written indelibly upon every heart, how soon would earth bloom in paradisaical beauty and love! How soon would the dove of peace hover over and brood the brotherhood of man! Then would sympathy, that connecting link in humanity’s chain, the intimate attendant and twin sister of kindness, lift its consolatory form, and smile to see the blissful change in

our sin-stricken earth. Then could we sing
exultingly,

“ We share our mutual woes,
Our mutual burdens bear,
While often for each other flows
The sympathizing tear.”

Then would Goldsmith cease to be acknowledged a true delineator of friendship's power, when he sang

“ And what is friendship but a name,
A charm that lulls to sleep,
A shade that follows wealth and fame,
And leaves the wretch to weep.”

But the few gleams of sunshine were only precursors of a darker hour, — gleams fitful and transient. Sorrow, and affliction severe, were still mingled in my cup. O! who can tell how little or how much of adversity's bitter dregs is in his portion? Darkness is round about the future, and thick darkness hideth it from mortal's gaze.

The youngest of our flock, a tender bud

of two years' growth, was at the time of mother's derangement adopted by a gentleman and lady of my native town, who had no offspring of their own ; and little George was again blessed with a mother's care, and a father's tender solicitude. How did my heart leap for joy, when I learned how kindly our Father above had provided for the little one, — how, when the rude hand of adversity compelled his father and mother to forsake him, the Lord had taken him up ! My heart's affections clung around this youngest one, and all the tender sympathies of my boyish nature were bestowed upon that fragile flower. He was a lovely boy. I see him now, as in childish glee he dances o'er his play-house ground. His mild blue eye, and raven locks, and snowy brow, and pearl-white neck, — his glowing cheeks, and merry laugh, and lute-like voice, — will never be forgotten. But alas ! the destroyer came, and George was not ! O, had disease noise-

lessly and silently drank up the fount of life — had fever scorched, or consumption wasted, — had friends been permitted to watch the ebbing tide, to see his last sands fall, — then would his death have been more endurable, his fate less sad. But not so : that tender innocent was met by death in a more terrible form. He came in haste, and left a mangled corpse. O God ! why, oh, why this mysteriously tragical end ? A loaded rifle was accidentally discharged by a heedless, reckless boy ; its contents pierced my brother's lovely frame, — he ran, caught the nursery door, — crying " Ma ! oh, Ma ! " — and died !

He sleeps now in the lonely church-yard. His frame long ere this has mingled with its mother earth, and corruption's loathsome form has done its utmost. But is this his end ? is this all of George's history ? does this sum the whole, — that

“ He tasted of life’s bitter cup,
Refused to drink the potion up,
Then turned his little head aside,
Disgusted with the taste, and died ” ?

O, no ! this is not all. George lives in endless life. He has dropped the habiliments of mortal flesh, and been robed in eternal righteousness. He joins now the cherub-choir of heaven. He helps to swell the anthem of the skies. His voice mingles with the holy throng, as in one vast and harmonious minstrelsy the strains of praise and love arise and fill the arched concave of heaven’s eternal dome ; and as the infant church-choir chant the glories of the babe of Bethlehem, he sings a higher note of joy, that so soon his earthly mission was accomplished, and he permitted that blissful choir to join, and freed from earth in glorious rest to spend a long eternity. Loved one, I shed no tears for thee :

“ No. brother, I will not weep,
Though I may greet thee here no more ;

Thy form, now stilled in death's cold sleep,
The grave a sacred trust shall keep,
Till ocean surges cease to roar.

"Before us thou hast found thy rest,
Where nought shall e'er disturb thee more.
In robes of heavenly triumph drest,
And pillowed on thy Saviour's breast,
Thy pains, and toils, and cares, are o'er.

"A radiant crown bestud with gems
Rests lightly o'er thy placid brow ;
A golden harp of tuneful strings,
Whence melody celestial springs,
Employs thy raptured spirit now.

"To where the patriarch spirits live,
And near thy unveiled Saviour's throne,
Where beatific smiles can give
All thy immortal longings crave,
To that bright mansion thou art gone.

"O then we may not weep for thee ;
Our tears shall not invade thy rest ;
But when a few short days shall flee,
We 'll greet thee in eternity,
Among the myriads of the blest."

Hope is the spirit's anchor, and if dragged
from its moorings, securely rests again in the

visions of a brighter day; and though its resting-place prove a bed of thorns, still it will seek another spot, unwearied and fearless of like fate. Precious boon! sweetener of life's draught, cheerer of life's brightest and loveliest visions! Without thy blest light, gloom and despair would overwhelm our race

“ Amid the ills and woes of life
That here mankind befall,
The wild confusion, endless strife,
The human race enthrall,
How cheering is the brilliant star
Which Hope to man has given,
That gleams in splendor from afar,
And lights his path to heaven!
Its lustre gilds misfortune o'er,
Turns darkness into day;
Imparts a joy unknown before,
The joy of ecstasy.

The hope that mother might regain her reason began now to dawn upon us. In fancy, we saw our circle, all but the lost one, gathered around our domestic hearth; a

father and a mother there, and the very fact of its endeared association having been once broken, gave a higher relish to our prospective enjoyment. But fancy paints what reality seldom produces. Father had conveyed mother to the far-famed Hartford Retreat for the Insane; and friends fondly believed she would recover. The maladies of the mind being better understood now than formerly, and more successfully treated, we hoped a happy result. A few months she had enjoyed the kind treatment of her attendants there, when the source of pecuniary means was exhausted. Father, by dint of daily toil, had been enabled to see us all comfortable in our new homes, and to bear the expense of mother's treatment in the asylum. But again were all our hopes blasted in the bud. An accident occurred, by the falling of a load of stones upon his limb, which for many months totally dis-

abled him from labor, and confined him to a bed of torture and of pain.

Reason fled, and he was left to rave in constant torture. For weeks he knew not the face of friends; and months ensued ere he breathed again the open air of heaven. Mother, of course, could no longer enjoy the benefits of that institution, and before the time arrived when father could again labor, she was pronounced irremediable and hopeless; and more, that blessed angel, Hope, had almost forsaken our pathway, and left our companionship.

CHAPTER V.

“Wait the result, nor ask, with doubting mind,
Why God permits such things. His ways, though now
Involved in clouds and darkness, will appear
All right, when from thine eyes the mist is cleared.
Till then, to learn submission to his will,
More wisdom shows, than vainly thus to attempt
Exploring what thou canst not comprehend,
And God, for wisest ends, thinks fit to hide.”

THE reader has now been conducted through various labyrinths in the history of an humble individual, and the mind, perhaps cloyed by the enumeration of misfortunes, like the weary traveller in the wilderness, is anxiously looking for some bright spot to break the sad monotony. I have looked for this many painful years. Sometimes a transient opening has admitted the sunbeams, and made visible a cloudless sky; but again

the closing forest and trackless wilderness have blighted all my earthly hopes.

Onward, then, with a lonely wanderer. You may find instruction and profit in the companionship of the afflicted. It is good to "weep with those who weep," and "it is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting."

I was endowed by my Maker with a strong physical frame, and a constitution that seemed to bid defiance to every destructive agency. But "man in his best estate is altogether vanity." Though he may possess "giant strength, bones of iron, joints of adamant, sinews of brass, and nerves of steel," yet he is cut down as a flower, and withers like the green herb.

On the morning of the 11th of September, 1832, the sun arose in its accustomed glory, and poured a flood of light on all the earth below, resuscitating each plant and flower, and new creating the world, and calling the

busy tribes of men to their duties and enjoyments. With the dawn of that morning, I arose to duty, in usual health, with the exception of a slight cold; but with the close of that day my earthly toil was done. With that setting sun I lay down to rest, no more to till the earth in the sweat of my face;—a heavier doom was mine. While walking the street, in the city of Hartford, I found my strength departing. After completing my errand, I endeavored to return; but, from some mysterious cause, my limbs failed to do their office, and I reeled to and fro, unable to proceed with a walk erect and firm. With some assistance, however, I reached home, where I seated myself as usual, but soon found, to my astonishment, that my arms hung powerless by my sides. After receiving some refreshment from the hand of my eldest sister, — for I could by no means help myself, — I retired to spend a sleepless night, and to go no more from my room, until

borne upon my couch. That night was one of serious reflection and fearful forebodings. But not until morning, when I found myself unable to move a limb, or even to lift a finger, did my condition appear to me in the fulness of its reality. A living being, but dead to all the world. A living body, with limbs that were mere useless appendages. Ah! thought I, as the tears coursed down my cheeks, the fleeting charms of this world are all gone. I am cast forth upon the charities of a cold, unfeeling world. I have a body, every part of which is keenly sensitive both to touch and pain; a tongue that can declare my wants, but no power to supply them. The wheels of time, perhaps, may drag heavily for many years, ere they shall have borne me to the termination of my journey. What dark events, hidden by a wise Providence, the future might disclose to my experience, I knew not. But I must gird myself to the shock, and

"With firm endurance meet the fatal strokes,
Like storm-scathed hills, or thunder-riven oaks.
These milder sufferings, more enduring woe,
That like Tophana's waters poison slow,
Bring no excitement, potent to sustain,
Inciting courage, and absorbing pain.
Such is his lot, in fragile frame arrayed,
On whom disease her solemn hand has laid."

But it was in mercy that kind Providence concealed the future. Had the veil been drawn, and its fearful scenery been opened at once to my view, this frame would have been crushed; — the mind could not have endured the sight, — it must have sunk into despondency, or fallen into desperation.

While multitudes send forth the voice of murmuring and complaint, concerning their unavoidable ignorance of the future, and are perplexed by the darkness in which they are compelled to proceed, and the uncertainty which hangs around the issues of their best arranged schemes, the thoughtful mind, even in this bewildering maze, can trace evi-

dences of Divine goodness. True, it is desirable to short-sighted man to know what is to befall him in life; but were this knowledge granted, were the panorama of the future, with all its fluctuating scenes, spread out before us, it might gratify a vain desire, but it could do no more. Indeed, it would be incalculably detrimental both to the happiness and the usefulness of men. If a series of prosperous events, and a long career of affluence, lay before us, — if our path were strewn with flowers, and our life to be crowned with honors, — a knowledge of the events, and familiarity with the scenes, would lessen the enjoyment they were capable of affording. The lover of the wild scenery of nature gazes upon towering mountains, and projecting cliffs, and deep ravines, and thundering cataracts, with stronger emotions of grandeur and sublimity than the dweller among those scenes. And why? To the one they are familiar,

and to the other new and strange. Thus are we less and less prepared to appreciate the blessings allotted to us, just in proportion to our previous knowledge of them, and as they come upon us more and more as matters of course.

If, on the contrary, we could see the way of our pilgrimage strewn with thorns, — if our cup were filled with bitterness, — we should be unmanned and enervated by the knowledge, — become unable to tread our dreary pathway, — to endure the weight of affliction, or to discharge the duties of life.

How perfectly disqualified would Job, that upright and patient servant of the Most High, have been, had he known the calamities that awaited him! His heart would have melted like wax; and like Belshazzar while in the midst of his revelry an armless hand wrote his doom upon the wall, the joints of his loins would have been loosed,

and his knees would have smote one against the other.

Though we may long to know the future, and strain the eye in fruitless endeavor to scan its occurrences, yet it is the great truth, that we know not what to-morrow shall bring forth, that nerves to vigilance and energy, and makes us pains-taking and parsimonious to-day.

It is in mercy that Providence has dropped the veil, and intercepted the view, disclosing events only to momentary experience. And as disclosed, if these events are calamitous, ignorance of the future leaves ground for hope, which sustains under them. If prosperous, the uncertainty and fleeting nature of earthly things—the conviction that our joys may be transient as a sunbeam, fleeting as a shadow that departeth, like a changing cloud, a gorgeous illusion, a' mist on the mountain side—is eminently calculated to promote humility, the fairest, loveliest

flower that grew in Eden, and to cultivate a sense of our entire dependence upon the Great Disposer of all events.

That man may be properly disciplined, and escape both despondency and haughty insolence, these two ingredients are intermingled in our cup, and concealed there by a hand of wisdom and of love. Each is alternately preparatory to the other, and our blessings are valued in proportion as they are conferred unexpectedly, and after the heart has been stricken with sorrow.

The weary and parched traveller drinks of the cooling fountain with a keener relish than the dweller in the fertile vale. The tempest-tossed mariner treads the earth with a higher sense of enjoyment than the man who was never rocked upon the heaving billow. Health is infinitely more desirable after a season of infirmity and pain, and spring is vastly more lovely after the gloominess and dreariness of winter : — thus prov-

ing that our joys are enhanced by the sorrows we experience, and by the uncertainty that hangs around us.

“It is good,” then, that the afflicted believer “should both hope and quietly wait for” deliverance. It is for him, through grace, to acquire the marvellous power of rejoicing in tribulation, and, inspired with an unwavering trust in God, to adopt the language of Habakkuk, “Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be found in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields yield no meat; the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation,” — “knowing that our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen : for the things which are seen are

temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

After being thus reduced to a state of utter helplessness, I resorted to remedies. The most eminent physicians were called, and exhausted all their skill; but were baffled in every effort to ascertain the cause or to remove the disease. For more than eighteen years, there has remained a perfect and total paralysis of all the muscles of volition. A slight motion of the head and body is all that could be produced. Finding that my case was desperate, and bid defiance to the whole system of “*Materia Medica*,” I endeavored to be composed and resigned to my fate. I now began to think seriously of my spiritual condition, and to throw my thoughts forward into a vast eternity, and inquire concerning my probable destiny.

CHAPTER VI.

“ Child of the promises ! dry up thy tears ;
Fly to the cross with all thy cares and fears ;
Beneath the droppings of Christ’s precious blood
Lay down at once thy murmurings and thy load.”

THUS far the reader has plodded with me through my earthly pilgrimage. My body, frail and feeble, has occupied your attention. But now the time is come to lift the spirit’s veil.

Being a homeless wanderer, my eternal interests were little cared for by others ; and often I felt keenly the neglect, and was led to say, “ No man careth for my soul.” True, I regularly attended the ministration of the word, before my disability, in the Old South Church, in the city of Hartford ; but the sermons were of such a nature, so much

of worldly wisdom, and so little of that pathos and earnestness that attracts and interests the uncultivated mind, that they were to me a mere form of words. The ceremonies of the house of God were all unmeaning, and their only object, to observe with decorum and respect the so-called Sabbath of the Lord. But, one Sabbath eve, I wandered into an obscure prayer-circle. I listened with amazement. The prayers there offered were the faithful exhibits of earnest hearts. Here I felt that there was something possessed by this humble band that formed my ideal of genuine piety and holy zeal. I saw and realized that a mere formal round of ceremonies and devotions was not all that constituted religion; but that there was life and power in it sufficient to arouse the dormant energies of a sinful soul, and cause it to wake to holy joy and spiritual life. It seemed that a new era had dawned in religious matters; for I had never heard

of things on this wise before. Such interest in each other's state, such union of loving hearts, and, withal, such unaffected simplicity! I felt that the days of primitive Christianity had come back to earth. And then, such appeals to those who knew not God, blended with affectionate, sympathetic entreaty, — such a delightful exhibit of the pleasures of religion, in contrast with those of earth, — of the joys of heaven, and the miseries of banishment from God, — I never heard before. My heart was not the only one that melted under the Spirit's influence. I returned from that meeting — but not to sleep. That night I offered my first prayer to God. In deep contrition of spirit, I bewailed my ingratitude and sin. The goodness of God passed in solemn review before me, in contrast with my unholiness and guilt. I realized his providential care in preserving me to that hour, and lamented my ungrateful and disobedient course. In

sincerity I recorded my vows, and resolved upon a course of holiness and devotion, fully determined to seek until I found the pardoning favor of God. But, alas! my impressions were as the early cloud and morning dew. I feared the face of clay, and dared not declare my intentions by coming out from the world and forsaking its pleasures. Gradually these impressions subsided, until I sinned as oft as before, and as prayerless lived. This was the first direct and powerful influence of the Spirit upon my heart. True, I had felt often to yearn for more substantial good, for something that could fill the soul. Each fondly anticipated good, when obtained, was unsatisfying, and was soon thrown aside like the useless toy of a child. Everything for which I panted, when realized, was as a changing cloud, a gorgeous illusion, a bubble in the wave. Pleasure lured, and I gayly danced along its flowery way. Business and ambition beckoned, and

I became thoughtlessly absorbed in their perplexities. But each left me insatiate and annoyed. Often, when viewing the works of nature, and admiring the beautiful scenery of the noble Connecticut's lovely vale, would a stillness, a sadness, settle down upon my spirit, as gently as the waving of a harvest-field by the soft zephyrs of a summer's eve, soft and genial as the coming of morn, that would not wake an infant from its slumbers; and I would involuntarily sigh for the waters of the river of life, and desire to be led by the good Shepherd into holier, lovelier scenes. And then, when the wild elements revelled as if intoxicate with wrath, — when the red lightnings glared and the thunder rolled, — when the tornado swept on, and the oak crashed upon the mountain, — a terror seized upon my frame lest the thunders of Divine wrath should leap upon me, or the lightnings of vengeance devour me. But so blinded and ignorant was I,

that I little thought these to be the visitations of the Spirit of grace, — that when this pensive sadness pervaded my soul, it was the whispering of the Holy Spirit, saying, Come, seek substantial good, that which will embody, exceed and satisfy, all that is ideal; — come to the waters of life; come, and peace, like a river, shall be yours, and joy unspeakable and full of glory. I knew not that, when filled with terror at the wild revel of the elements; that it was God's voice speaking in thunder-tones to come away from that place of danger, to seek shelter in the Rock that was cleft to take me in; to come where torrents never flow, where lightnings never play or thunders roll; but where peace, tranquillity and love preside, and where eternal sunshine settles on the soul.

Years fled, and sad changes were wrought in my physical frame. The sorrows of my early youth were nought to this. Even life itself was rendered burdensome, and I longed

to die. Do you wonder at this, dear reader? What was life to me, since all its active scenes were as though they were not? For, henceforth I was to be an invalid;—more than this, the power of locomotion was forever-gone, and I compelled to sit in the same position the remnant of my days.

The hand of God in this I now distinctly see. O, how do I adore the riches of his grace in employing any mode of operation to secure my eternal good! Perhaps never should I have known my sins forgiven, or felt his blood applied, if affliction had not thus been my portion. Surely it has been to me a blessing in disguise! and I now am enabled to say, through grace, “The cup that my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” But I anticipate.

About three years after I lost the use of my limbs, and when hope had almost fled concerning my recovery, I bethought myself of God. Hitherto I had been reckless and

complaining, caring for nought but returning health, dependent upon others for every temporal blessing, and no source within of peace and comfort. O, wretched state! Destitute of the pleasures of earth or religion, why is life prolonged? Better lay me down and die, than drag out such a miserable existence. The eternal future I cared not for,—no future condition can be more wretched than this;—and more, when life's lamp flickers in its socket, and is extinguished by the blast of death, there shall be an end of all my sufferings, and I conducted to the mansions of the blest, for "Jesus died the world to save." "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Thus, you see, I had imbibed, while in health, the belief of my father, that all men are unconditionally saved. For months I repined and murmured, against God, and considered him unjust. According to my own theory, that

punishment was confined to this life, that it always follows immediately the commission of sin, I certainly must have been of all sinners the chief; for none were so afflicted. The inquiry would often arise, What have I done to merit punishment so severe? I knew I had not obeyed all of God's commands, but I had never been openly wicked or profane. The bacchanalian revel, or inebriate's bowl, was not my resort. The violator of God's day, or the profaner of his name, were not my companions. I considered myself at least tolerably moral and upright. Now, here was a problem for me, as a Universalist, to solve, — to reconcile my creed with my own condition. Again, I looked upon the world, and some, who were unrighteous, flourished as the green bay tree. Earth's treasures showered into their coffers, and they had all that heart could wish; while others, who were devoted and pious, pined in poverty and neglected

solitude. The more I meditated, the more fallacious my doctrine appeared; and soon I turned to see what was written in the law and testimony. A frame was prepared directly in front of me, and by holding a pointed wire between my teeth, I was enabled to turn the leaves, and thus read the oracles of truth. I was induced to read, to beguile the tediousness of the hours; but more strongly, that I might arrive at truth,—for my soul panted for a reality of good. I commenced the Bible by course, and before I had finished, I came to the conclusion that

“ The sinner must be born again,
Or feel the wrath of God.”

When this was settled, I looked to the hills whence strength cometh for help. O, how earnestly did I pray for the Holy Spirit's influence, to soften and subdue! for as yet my judgment only was convinced. No ray of hope beamed from the skies, and for

weeks I groped in impenetrable night; but still I prayed, and groaned, and agonized. The word of God I diligently and prayerfully read, in connection with other works. The writings of Josephus were to me witnesses of the truth of the word of God; and I derived some consolation from the fact that I had arrived at the fountain of truth, though its efficacy and power had not been felt upon my heart. Fox's Book of Martyrs was next perused; and oh, in eternity I shall rejoice for its blessed effects! Hope began to dawn. I felt there was a power somewhere that could remove the load of guilt and sin from my burdened heart,—that there was something that could cause me, even in deep affliction, to rejoice. I was conscious that the elements of happiness were in one's own bosom, and not necessarily dependent upon circumstances. If the worthy martyrs could rejoice in prospect of death in all its horrid forms,—exult

in sight of fire and fagot, — triumph in full view of every imaginable invention of torturous death, — glory in tribulation under the fatal blade, and amid the curling flames, — surely these light afflictions of mine are endurable. My sorrows are not like their sorrows, nor my grief like theirs. I am only trammelled in body, and that too by one who has a right thus to do; but I have the free use of religious liberty to serve God according to the dictates of my own conscience, — while by men they were deprived of this. Let tyrants fetter my body; — let it be torn in pieces by wild beasts, — let the rack, and fire, and all the instruments of suffering combined, be put under contribution, — but give me the free power of yielding to God acceptable service, and mine is the better portion. And now I thought that the same power that was given to them could be imparted to me, — for God is no respecter of persons. Cheer up, my soul!

“Give to the winds thy fears ;
 Hope, and be undismayed ;
God hears thy sighs, and counts thy tears,
 God shall lift up thy head.
Through waves, and clouds, and storms,
 He gently clears thy way ;
Wait thou his time, — so shall this night
 Soon end in joyous day.”

About this time, a few pious young men of the village where I then resided came weekly to my room, and held prayer-meetings with special reference to my case, which, under the blessing of God, were instrumental in leading me to the Fountain of Life. Soon I was enabled to see light begin to dawn, and it gradually brightened until I knew that the Sun of Righteousness shed his benign rays upon my heart, and I felt the transforming influence. Now, I rejoiced in tribulation, and saw distinctly a Father's hand in all my pathway, guiding and directing, that I might be brought to this blessed state. Thus has the heavenly

gardener dug about me, a withered, barren fig-tree, until at last the effects are seen. But oh, it has been costly digging! It has cost me all earth's pleasures and enjoyments, — the loss of limbs, and the loss of health; but what are these in comparison with a knowledge of sins forgiven, and the approbation of Heaven? Not worthy to be compared. "Bless the Lord, oh my soul, and forget not all his benefits!" Since that blissful hour, I have been enabled to rejoice in prospect of constant disease, infirmity, and a premature death, and in anticipation of receiving a crown of glory when permitted to lay aside these vestments of mortality. I am confident there is as bright a crown for those who suffer, as for those who do his will. Most cheerfully, then,

"I'll suffer on my threescore years,
Till my deliverer come,
To wipe away his servant's tears,
And take his exile home."

At times my heart has wandered ; but God has kindly chastened, and I have been brought again to give him my best affections. O, the goodness and mercy of God, in using such varied means to bring us back to his embrace ! And now I am waiting for my hour of dissolution, when this earthly house shall be taken down, and I shall be borne on seraph's wings to mansions of bliss !

Although comparative bliss was now my portion, still I had not suffered all God's righteous will. A scene of deep affliction was again allotted me. My father had borne for twelve years the weight of grief occasioned by mother's insanity, and the scattering of his household, with fortitude, and had ever been a kind father ; sympathizing with us in our sorrows, and rejoicing in our prosperity. But at length, a downcast and dejected man, he came to his end by drowning, in the town of Manchester,

Connecticut. In a few short weeks after this, the youngest of my two sisters sickened and died, leaving a husband and little one; and shortly after, the other sister was carried to the tomb. The remains of one rest in Glastenbury, and the other in Feeding-Hills, Mass. Both I hope to meet again in heaven. O, yes; there will be a reünion! Blessed thought! Even now I see them sweeping the golden harp, and hear them swell the anthem of praise to the glorious Redeemer!

The Bible has taught me to be patient in affliction; and grace has strengthened me to endure "as seeing him who is invisible." I have learned to "rejoice in the Lord always;" to "let my moderation be known unto all men," and to feel that "the Lord is at hand." I have been instructed, from the blessed volume of truth, to "Be careful for nothing; but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, to let my

requests be made known unto God," conscious that "the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep my heart and mind through Christ Jesus." Thanks be to God, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound; everywhere, and in all things, I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me."

After despairing of recovering my strength, I placed myself under the instruction of stern *necessity*; and found her to be indeed "the mother of invention."

I have stated that, by means of a frame attached to my chair, and placed in a proper position before me, I was able to read, turning the leaves with a pointed wire. I soon found that by laying a slate upon the frame, I could use a pencil, and form letters or

figures. With this facility, I commenced the study of mathematics, and prosecuted it with success, hoping to realize some pecuniary aid, to supply my immediate wants; but in this respect I failed. It afforded me, however, ample pleasure and satisfaction. It relieved the monotony of life, and tended to discipline the mind to close application, so that to this day I feel its effects in the power, feeble though it may be, to concentrate thought.

I next applied myself to the science of music. I had ever been a lover of music, both vocal and instrumental; but not an adept in either. The depths of my soul have often been stirred while listening to the solemn organ's peal, and the chant of voices tuned to praise. Nature had bestowed a deep bass voice, so that I longed to become a proficient. I succeeded so far as to enable me to read very readily any composition, however difficult; and often has my soul

exulted, while, I trust with the spirit, and with the understanding also, I have sung the praise of God.

I next discovered, that by holding a pencil between my teeth, I could write on paper, arranging my manuscript with the pointed wire attached to my teeth, by means of a cord drawn between them, by which it was suspended when not in use. I soon attempted to use a pen in the same manner, and by diligent application for nearly a year, succeeded in being able to write legibly.

Having thus far overcome difficulties that seemed utterly insurmountable, I now conceived the idea of writing a little book, and at once addressed myself to the work. Slow and tedious has been the process ; but the result is now before the reader, accompanied with the earnest desire that the author may prove a sun of consolation to some of the afflicted ones of earth.

CHAPTER VII.

“O what am I, that I should dare arraign
Thy righteous dealings, Judge of all the earth?
A rebel and transgressor from my birth, —
Conceived in sin, — the heir of wrath and pain,
What cause have I to murmur and complain,
When thou art pleased to smite? For hadst thou dealt
In righteous judgment, I had long since dwelt
In that abyss where prayer itself, t’ obtain
The slightest mitigation of my doom,
Were unavailing. Let me rather praise
Thy patience, that thou dost not yet consume
So vile a wretch. O no! Thy word of grace
Assures me that the deepest wounds I feel
Are given in mercy, — not to slay, — but heal.”

“God moves in a mysterious way.” If
we attempt at all times to trace his provi-
dences, we find that “clouds and darkness
are round about him,” and from the midst
we hear a voice saying, “What I do thou

knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." However insatiable the desire for knowledge which God has implanted in the human breast, it is the evident intention of its Author that it should not be gratified to its utmost extent in the present state of being. Though it may ascend to the very footsteps of the eternal throne, yet there it is stayed by the glory of him that sits upon it. Every subject that passes before the mind is to a greater or less extent involved in mystery, and utterly beyond our comprehension. Everything that we know brings with it something that we cannot know. The systems of nature, of grace, and of providence, are replete with enigmas. Nature's varied scenes are spread out before us, illustrative of the wisdom, power and goodness, of the Creator; and conduct us, in our contemplations, up to "nature's God." "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork;

day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge ;” but at the same time mystery enshrouds all its essences, and intercepts our inquiring zeal. “The minute and the vast are alike inscrutable. We can no more comprehend an insect than we can grasp a world. After all the investigations of the wise, they have gone but a few steps beyond the vulgar. A true philosopher will say, in the language of one of the brightest ornaments of the philosophic school, ‘All that we know is, that we know nothing.’” Nature, indeed, distinctly points out to us a God, but she will reply to none of the inquiries which curiosity may dictate. She says to reason, “Thus far shalt thou go, and no further.”

Doubtless, every fact, agent and operation, in the natural world, has its design. The heaving of the ocean and the uncapping of the mountain, the rumbling of the thunder and the lightning blazing across the heavens,

these mighty agents and events, and the minute too, that are scarcely observed by the contemplative mind, are not without a purpose.

“The zephyr playing with an aspen leaf, — the earthquake
that rendeth a continent ;
The moonbeams silvering a ruined arch, — the desert wave
dashing up a pyramid ;
The thunder of jarring icebergs, — the stops of a shepherd’s
pipe ;
The howl of the tiger in the glen, — and the wood-dove calling
to her mate ;
The vulture’s cruel rage, — the grace of the stately swan ;
The fierceness looking from the lynx’s eye, — and the dull
stupor of the sloth ; —
To these, and to all, is there added each its use, though man
considereth it lightly ;
For Power hath ordained nothing which Economy saw not
needful.”

And even Revelation itself, which professedly makes known to us the deep things of God, reveals facts, but does not pretend to explain the theory of those facts.

“The Christian’s faith had many mysteries too.
The uncreated holy Three in One ;

Divine incarnate ; human in divine ;
The inward call ; the sanctifying dew,
Coming unseen, unseen departing thence ;
Anew creating all, and yet not heard ;
Mysterious these, — because too large for eye
Of man, too long for human arm to mete."

How it is that the invisible spirit of the Most High enters the heart of man, and accomplishes its work, "creating it anew in righteousness and true holiness," is only thus explained: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth. So is every one that is born of the spirit."

The most accomplished sceptic and the most deep-read infidel, while they may cavil at the revealed system of Christianity, cannot pretend to account for it or to comprehend it in all its length and breadth; and the most deeply-experienced and learned believer, while his soul triumphs in the belief of the Christian scheme, is constrained

to confess that it is too wonderful for him. He can comprehend neither the love that prompted, the wisdom that conceived, or the power that executed it. Not that it contains anything contrary to reason, but it is far above, and extends infinitely beyond, reason.

But the mysteries of Providence very far transcend those of nature and of grace. There are, indeed, evident marks, that God, "who sitteth upon the circle of the heavens," "ruleth among the children of men;" but from our incapacity to understand the whole system of his government, we are often involved in perplexity, and the voice of murmuring and complaint is heard concerning the Divine dealings. But our perplexity is all to be attributed to our ignorance of the ways of the Lord. To attempt to penetrate the mystery, and understand all the deep and sacred designs of the Almighty, is but a vain attempt of a finite mind to grasp the Infinite, — to comprehend the incomprehen-

sible, or to fathom the fathomless. The great reason why Providence does not appear to pursue a regular and consistent plan, — why virtue is not always crowned with temporal prosperity, and vice invariably attended with temporal misery, — is, that God has to deal with an ungrateful and rebellious race, and at the same time govern them as moral agents. There are, indeed, palpable evidences that God approves virtue and intends a reward; that he disapproves vice, and designs punishment. These evidences are to be traced both in our physical frame and in our mental nature. The blushing cheek, the tremulous and abashed eye, the trembling hand, and convulsed frame, are indexes of the guilt that exists in the heart, and are designed to betray the offender. The brow calm, the eye serene, and the frame composed, are designed as marks of innocence, which God has affixed to the physical system.

In the mind God has erected his own tribunal. He has placed conscience there, in its high office of observing all the actions of men, and all their thoughts and motives, and endowed it with the marvellous power of uttering its voice so as to be heard above the din of the human passions, consoling the upright with its approval, sanctioned by the Most High, and infusing gall into the sweetest cups of the offending and rebellious, upbraiding them with remorseful reflections and fearful forebodings of coming vengeance.

But while this is admitted as rational and consistent truth, there are many isolated events which appear to be exceptions, and from which the conclusion is drawn by the superficial observer, that chance rules the world. These instances are those in which the wicked are allowed to prosper in the things of this world, until "their eyes stand out with fatness, and they have more than heart can wish," while the virtuous and

devoted are compelled to repine in indigence, and mourn the absence of the blessings of Providence. Criminals often escape undetected and unpunished, while the heaviest calamities fall upon the innocent and unoffending. The wicked live many years, to execute their plans of evil, while the righteous are often cut down in the midst of their career of usefulness, or adversity blights their fairest prospects, and consigns them to obscurity and suffering. Virtuous youth, and helpless, harmless infancy, are by no means shielded from the relentless hand of the destroyer. Earthquakes and floods, famine and pestilence, are commissioned to sweep away indiscriminately the innocent and the guilty. The unoffending infant is selected by the destroyer as his victim. In his iron grasp it writhes and groans, but writhes and groans in vain. It lifts up its infant wailing, but the foe has no heart to feel. Its pensive moan and bitter

complaint, together with fond parents' tears and prayers, are alike disregarded. At length the fragile frame yields to the stroke, the labored breath grows short, and yet shorter still; the dimly burning taper that lit its cherub face is extinguished, and the lovely innocent is no more. Is it because of the sins of the sufferer, that a righteous Judge has permitted this? No; it has committed no sin; it has not known good or evil. Though God, in this instance, has acted as a ruler, yet has he "held back the face of his throne, and spread his cloud upon it."

We see next a lovely and vigorous youth, flushed with hope, and full of cheerfulness and joy. He has been the object of parents' solicitude,—a father's counsel and a mother's prayers. Mental and moral culture have been bestowed without measure. He is qualified for the highest stations of influence and usefulness. With this high endowment

he goes forth, his glad heart beating with the throb of enthusiasm as his eye rests upon the whitened fields all ready for the harvest, which he hopes, with the Divine blessing, to gather into the garner of the Lord. But to-morrow that foot-tread ceases to be heard. That large heart has ceased to beat. Those bright prospects are vanished. That spirit, that panted to bring souls under the dominion of Christ, has taken its flight, and there is left only a mass of mouldering clay. Contemplating the event, we are constrained to confess that the Governor of the universe is a "God that hideth himself."—"Clouds and darkness are round about him. His way is in the sea, and his path in the great waters; his footsteps are not known."

These events are mysteries, that no wisdom, however profound, unaided from above, can solve. But with the light of revelation, and with the history of the past before us, we may rationally conclude that they are

not controlled by caprice, — that they are not left to roll on by mere chance, neither occasioned or permitted by one who is regardless of men, or who rules as a tyrant.

Vain man would be wise. He would choose his own path. But if allowed to do so, though the path of his choice might be strewn with flowers, and the blessings of his selection innumerable, he would inevitably be ruined. We are strongly inclined to pray ardently to be delivered from affliction; and yet the Scriptures reveal affliction as necessary, that we may be properly disciplined for that world where affliction is no more. We are so ignorant of ourselves, and of the circumstances that surround us, that we know not what to ask at the hand of the Lord, or what will in the end prove a blessing.

By reason of his ignorance, what an error was committed by Lot, when he chose for his residence the plain of Jordan, because it

was well watered, even as the garden of the Lord; which was afterward overthrown for the wickedness of the inhabitants, and he lost all his possessions, together with the partner of his youth, and himself and daughters narrowly escaped! How little did Jacob, though so pious a servant of God, know, when he said of the providential arrangement by which his household was to be sustained in the years of famine, "All these things are against me!" How ignorant was Elijah when he fled from Jezebel, and requested for himself that he might die, — Peter, when he would have dissuaded the Lord from suffering, — and the disciples, when they would have called down fire from heaven to consume the city of the Samaritans!

And hence, because of our incompetency, the Lord has graciously reserved the selection of providences with himself. "In the hand of the Lord there is a cup; it is full of

mixture, and the wine is red. He poureth it out." He imparts favors as we can bear them, and afflictions, disappointments and bereavements, as they are necessary for our correction, reproof and profit. The great reason of the mystery connected with providential occurrences is, that we know only in part. We trace only here and there an event; and not being able to know its design, or its connection with other events, it is a total mystery. If a complicated piece of machinery were taken in pieces, and scattered to the four corners of the earth, and a traveller, ignorant of the whole, were to take up a separate part, not knowing its design, the relation it sustained to others, or the power it was designed to exert over others, it would be perfectly mysterious to him. But, let the scattered parts be collected and placed in their proper position before him, and allow him then to see the whole in operation, and the mystery will be developed.

Thus with the events of providence. We find them separate and alone. We see one lifted up, and another, equally virtuous, cast down; and we can by no means solve the mystery. But could we cast off the darkness that enshrouds us,—could we rise to some eminence above the capacity of finite beings, and, with an eye that could comprehend all things, see as God sees, and understand as he understands,—we should discover that, with the wisdom worthy of a God, he is controlling the universe;—we should be constrained to adore the wisdom and the ways of God,—“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God;—how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!”

It is obvious that the present is a state of probation,—that God does not ordinarily punish sin immediately upon its commission, nor reward the deeds of virtue as they are performed. And if we were not left in a

measure ignorant of the Divine ways, no room would be left for the exercise of faith. Knowledge would take its place, and we must necessarily be deprived of the rich reward which is bestowed upon him who trusts in His word.

God designs that his mighty working should produce an effect, not upon a single individual merely, nor even a single generation — but that each event should be felt in coming ages, down to the close of time.

How little did Abraham know of God's wise and merciful design, when, after declaring to him, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called, and in him shall all nations of the earth be blessed," he issued the command, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the mountain of Moriah, and offer him up there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains that I shall tell thee of!" And it was not until, in obedience to the command, he

had ascended the mountain, and built an altar, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood, and lifted the knife to slay his son, that the mystery was in any measure developed. Tracing it as an event of history, we can now see the grand design. It was to prove that patriarch, — to call out and exhibit the power of his faith for the benefit of the world.

How little would the world ever have known of the extent to which patience might be exercised in affliction, had not God permitted Job to fall into the hands of his enemy, and caused the account to be recorded for our instruction ! We learn the power of faith to triumph over all calamities from the numerous instances recorded in the Scriptures of the ancient worthies, “ who, through faith, subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire,

escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens."

Murmur not, then, at the dispensations of providence! If the wicked are left to prosper in their wickedness,—if "they are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men—if their pride compasseth them about as a chain, and violence covereth them as a garment,"—go with David into the sanctuary of the Lord, and understand their end. Know thou that with Dives they are receiving their good things, and are permitted to prosper in this life, that, despising the riches of Divine grace, their ruin may be more conspicuous, and their end more terrible;—while it is in the season of the deepest affliction that God is pledged to be with the believer, to deliver him, and honor him. It is then that he finds cause to break into the song, "It is good for me that I was afflicted; for the

Lord will command his loving-kindness in the day-time, and in the night his song shall be with me.”

This is a subject which, for many years, that I have spent in solitude, has occupied my thoughts. I have learned wisdom by the things that I have suffered. I have learned to bow submissively under the hand of God,—to reverence his ways,—to acknowledge the supreme authority of his word; and to adore where I cannot comprehend, and to wait patiently for eternity to break the seal, disclose mysteries, and open to the eager gaze that book which will ever be unfolding the providential dealings of God. O, that History of histories, which records what wonders God has wrought, to keep men back from the pit, and conduct them to himself!

Then I may learn that a kind mother was bereft of reason here, that she might be crowned with glory hereafter; that she was

suffered to live a wandering maniac, that the proud hearts of sons and daughters might be humbled;—that the tender bud of glory was violently cut down, that it might not drink in the pestilential miasma of earth, and bear the blight forever; and then by angels was borne home with joy, to shed its fragrance in heaven. Sisters were stricken down, with some wise design, that I shall then understand. And as for myself, I shall learn, as I now feel, that God has dealt mercifully with me. I refused to walk in his ordinances, and he came and paralyzed these limbs, that I should not walk at all upon his footstool;—I would not employ my hands in his service, and he smote them like the barren fig-tree, that, withered and shrivelled as they are, they should not be employed in the service of sin. I lifted my puny arm against the authority of Heaven, and powerless it fell, to be lifted no more. I refused to yield

obedience to the commands of God, and the storm of vengeance was gathering, and the clouds of wrath were marshalling themselves, to pour their furious artillery upon my head forever; and the hand of the Lord was laid upon me, that I might be bowed down under it, until the storm of danger should pass over. My mental and moral powers were left unharmed. Bereft of all other, and made to see and to feel my feebleness, these I consecrated to God;—poor and unworthy the offering, but it is all I have, and God requires no more. Now, “I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to his care unto that day.” Let the turbid waters of affliction roll high, and let their angry billows dash and break around me,—let the storms of adversity come down and beat in all their fury upon my head! My anchor is within the vail; and, through grace, I shall not be moved.

And if, by slowly rolling years, "this earthly house of my tabernacle be dissolved, I have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

When I think of the scenes through which I have passed, my heart saddens; but hitherto God hath sustained me, and I have abundant reason to magnify the riches of his grace, and to adore his matchless wisdom, in bringing exiles home.

The future is full of pleasing anticipations, and images more lovely than fancy can paint. They are opened to view by revelation and grace. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for those that love him." I see a fond and affectionate mother, clothed in her right mind, and bearing the image of the heavenly; an infant brother, walking by the "river of life," and causing the atmosphere of heaven to tremble with his songs

of praise; I see sisters, clothed in white, and plucking "ambrosial fruit that grows on life's fair tree;" and all the members of a severed family that have been renewed by grace, and endure to the end, shall meet again; the family bond will again be united. He who hath scattered shall send forth his angels, and gather his saints from the four corners under heaven. "Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven." Then shall these dormant and paralyzed limbs feel the flow of vigor and of health, and through grace, I shall, with an elastic step, walk the streets of the Holy City, and, with the multitude that have come up through great tribulation, cause heaven's high dome to ring with the melody of the exalted and triumphant song, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his

Father; to him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever! Amen."

" I bless thee, Father, that thy breath has given
Existence unto me, a broken reed ;
That, midst the griefs by which life's ties are riven,
Thou hast bestowed me strength in time of need ;
Thy hand upheld me when my heart was fraught
With griefs that wrung my full heart to the core ;
Though I perceived not, 't was thy hand that brought
The " balm of Gilead " to the festering sore.

" I bless thee, Father, for the sunlight streaming,
Like golden showers, on forest, hill and dome ;
And for the blessed stars, like watch-fires gleaming
On heaven's high walls, to light us to our home
And for each little flower that lifts its cup
Of gentle beauty through the emerald sod,
Sending its perfume — Nature's incense — up
Unto thy throne, I bless thee, oh my God !

" I bless thee, Father, for the light which shineth,
Clear and unbroken, on life's rugged way —
A ray from thy pure throne, which ne'er declineth,
But ever brightens till the perfect day ;
That thou hast taught my heart to be content —
My weary soul to suffer and be still —
A pilgrim I, who patiently must wait,
Till I have done on earth my Master's will."

NARRATIVE
AND
REFLECTIONS
OF
✓
JUSTIN WELLS.

4 B2
COMPILED FROM MANUSCRIPTS WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

FOURTH THOUSAND.

BOSTON:
PUBLISHED FOR THE PROPRIETOR,
BY C. H. PEIRCE.

1852.

77

Entered according to act of Congress, in the year 1850, by
G. C. WELLS,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of Massachusetts.

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PREFACE.

THE author of this narrative is an invalid. More than eighteen years since, he became the victim of disease, which has produced a perfect and total paralysis of all the muscles of volition. A slight motion of the head and body is all of which he is capable. The faculties of the mind and the vocal organs remain unimpaired. In such a state of helplessness he has written this volume, by having the manuscript laid on a frame attached to the front of his chair, and holding the pen in his teeth, as represented in the engraving.

It has been a slow and laborious work, confining him more than a year to almost incessant toil.

It is now offered to the public, with the hope that it may be rendered a blessing to many ; and that the sufferer may derive some pecuniary aid in his affliction.

The author is aware that so strange a method of writing will appear incredible ; hence, the following

certificates, proffered by respectable gentlemen of the town of Colchester, Connecticut, — the place of his residence, — are here inserted.

I hereby certify, that I have visited Mr. Justin Wells, a man afflicted as he states, and wholly deprived of the use of his limbs. I have also seen him write, by holding his pen with his teeth, in a slow and toilsome way, and am fully persuaded that he can write in no other, not being able to use arms, or hands, or feet, in any degree whatever.

ALBERT F. PARK,

Pastor of the M. E. Church in Colchester.

COLCHESTER, CONN., Aug. 19, 1850.

I hereby certify that I have seen Mr. Justin Wells write. I know that his manner of holding a pen is as represented in the accompanying engraving, and that all his writing is done in the same way, — he not having the least use of his hands.

J. B. WHEELER.

COLCHESTER, CONN., AUG. 15, 1850.

CHAPTER I.

"Lulled in the countless chambers of the brain,
Our thoughts are linked by many a hidden chain;
Awake but one, and lo! what myriads rise —
Each stamps its image as the other flies.
Each, as the varied avenues of sense
Delight or sorrow to the soul dispense,
Brightens or fades; yet all, with magic art,
Control the latent fibres of the heart."

THE delightful and romantic town of Hebron, Conn., is hallowed in memory as the place of my birth, and the scenes of my early youth. Of all others, that spot is invested with perennial joys and unfading bliss. It is consecrated by the gambols of childhood, and the nurture of tender age. The voices of my playmates, and the wild fancies of youth, are there. It was there I chased the gay butterfly in the fields, lis-

tened to the gay notes of birds, and plucked the blooming flowers, to inhale their fragrance. Like a dream when the morning is come, the scenes of home now all rush upon the mind. And thither, when age has mantled my temples with the hoar-frosts of time, shall I delight, with these palsied limbs, to repair, and sit down among the graves of those I love, and weep. There, in the buoyancy of youthful hope, the future spread out its vast panorama of pleasure, usefulness, and delight. Its unexplored regions, its ample fields, and beautiful groves, which were to be traversed in my coming threescore years and ten, were to me all that poetry could describe in imagery, or pencil paint in fancy. The sportive scenes of childhood were but the vestibule through which I must pass to the inner temple of experience and usefulness. And how has my little heart panted with glowing enthusiasm and ardent longings, when thinking

of the future! The future—that mysterious book, of which but a page, a sentence, a line, is disclosed at once, and which, as disclosed, often blights our fairest prospects, destroys our most sanguine hopes, and chills our most blissful expectations.

An unbroken group was ours. A father who had a father's heart, a mother who lived only for her loved ones, four warm-hearted brothers, and two lovely sisters, together with myself, the elder, constituted our happy circle. Providence dealt but sparingly with her temporal gifts; yet did no splendid mansion, with luxury loaded table, afford more affectionate or happy hearts. Poverty, however, with its lean and haggard and filthy face, was not a resident or guest within our humble home; for blessings procured by the honest, industrious labor of a father, with the frugal care and unspotted neatness of a mother, gave an aspect of comfort and easy independence to

our lowly habitation. Many buildings of beautiful architecture, costly material, and imposing aspect, would be passed by the traveller with less pleasure and interest than our jessamine cottage; for the ivy and honeysuckle, the morning-glory, and humble violet, together with a great variety of the poor man's horticultural specimens, were abundantly profuse. Exotics rich, dahlias, cactuses, and geraniums, would have as illy become our home, as jewels on a beggar's gown. But Nature, always lavish, always kind, supplied their place; and, trained by the tasteful hand of mother, our cottage garden was filled with humble flowers, which perfumed the atmosphere with what was to us almost celestial fragrance.

Thus sweetly passed twelve happy years, — years of unsullied bliss — of pleasure unalloyed. How swiftly did they speed! And though the glowing aspirations of youth would have fain transported me to the time

when I should be a man; yet so peaceful, so tranquil, was our home, gladly would I have remained there until time had silvered my locks, furrowed my cheeks, palsied my limbs; and there, in that loved spot, laid me down to die. My ardent longings for coming usefulness and honor would have quietly resigned their position to the stronger love of home. Life then was as a summer's day, in whose sunbeam I sported as playfully as the insect on its tiny wing,—as an unruffled sea, upon whose smooth and tranquil surface I reposed, unmindful of clouds or storms,—as the pleasant day-dream of an excited fancy, upon whose pinions I soared in ecstasy, — as the clear, cloudless sunlight of one constant, ever-during day.

But alas! this bright summer's day was followed by a long and gloomy night, — a night without moon or stars, — a night upon which the sun has not risen for weeks, for months, for years. This calm, unruffled

sea has been lashed to a dreadful storm, and the tempest dashed its fury against my frail bark, almost to its perishing. This fanciful day-dream has become, in its opposite, a sad reality, and life, by adversity's chill blasts, become a dreary waste, — a wilderness of sorrow and of grief. I have found this to be a mixed world ; — a world of joy and sorrow ; a world of prosperity and adversity ; a world of health and disease ; a world of life and death. O, ye who have dreamed of nought but shady paths, and sunny scenes, and bubbling springs, and placid seas, and gentle zephyrs, will find yourselves deceived, as the events of life come on ! The cup of which you drink is a mingled one ; the path in which you tread alike yields thorns and flowers. Enjoyment, says one, is indestructible ; and were it not for this, how little of pleasure would be mingled in my cup ! Forty-two years have fled since first I saw the light ; and oh ! did

not memory recall those twelve bright years of early youth, drear indeed would be the retrospect. Sunny spots, oases in my life's landscape, "are like angels' visits, few and far between." But often now, while this emaciated frame and useless limbs are racked with pain, do I repair to my once blissful home. Again the happy group is met; the voices of those I love most on earth are stealing with heaven's own music on my ear, and, fresh with youthful vigor and glowing hope, I seem to live again in the bright visions of the past.

CHAPTER II.

"O love! thy visitings of earth are ever, ever brief,
As summer's evanescent flowers, or autumn's fading leaf;
We clasp thee to our throbbing hearts, and wildly, vainly cling
To cherished idol-forms of clay, — frail, fragile, withering."

BUT a change has come over the spirit of my dream. My pen almost refuses to perform its office, and gladly would I blot from my mind's tablet the mysterious event which proved destructive to earth's enjoyments, and severed the links which so closely bound our circle.

After an absence of a few weeks from home, I started, one fine afternoon, to return. My route lay through the midst of one of the loveliest of New England's many lovely scenes. Far below, on their ocean-ward journey, danced the clear waters of the ma-

jestic Connecticut, glittering in the sun of that October sky, and sweeping around as if they loved to linger in the soft bosom of those merry green hills. Far in the distance, and on all sides, rose an amphitheatre of hills, and gently swelling mountains, spotted with beautiful farms, and crowned with their woody crests, rising tier above tier, and stretching away until they seemed to cut the azure canopy of heaven. The hours flew swiftly by, for, though a boy, I had a soul that could feel the beauties of nature. The sun, which thus far had been riding through a cloudless sky, was just sinking in the west. Filled with emotions of sublimity and love, while gazing on this magnificent scene, I thought of heaven, the home of the blessed, and, by association, of my own loved home — the bosom of my earthly joys.

Just then the paternal dwelling met my gaze. The cottage gate is opened for my reception. The voices of merry ones greet

my ear, and I am within the loved precincts of home. Anxious inquiries concerning health and enjoyment are proffered by her who gave me birth. But the appearance of all around was altered. In the place of the beaming intelligence and glowing affection of a mother, appeared alternately the down-cast look and the vacant stare, indicating a saddened heart and a bewildered mind. I was not yet versed in the philosophy of mind, and knew not how to interpret the change; but it chilled my youthful heart, and in perplexity I retired to rest. On the succeeding morning, I arose with the dawn of the genial light, and descending the stairs, the first object that met my gaze was mother. She ran with violence, — clasped me in her arms, and, with convulsive grasp and choked utterance, breathed forth an incoherent, agonizing prayer to God, for the preservation of her first-born son. “O God, save, oh save and care for this my boy when I am gone!”

Bewildered, I gazed upon her as she loosed her hold, and the fearful truth was disclosed by the wild glare of those eyes, accustomed only to beam with affection and love, — my mother was a maniac! And who can describe all that fearful word imports? — bereft of reason — that noble faculty, that offspring of Deity, that which gives dignity to man, and clothes him with a limited omnipotence. That principle was dethroned, and in its dethronement all that constituted a mother was lost.

But though madness had seized her brain, still did maternal affection outlive the wreck of mind, and anxiety for her offspring exceed all other. Who can tell the depths of a mother's heart! Her affection knows no ebbing tide. It flows on from a pure fountain, spreading happiness through all this vale of tears, and ceases only at the ocean of eternity. It has no semblance on earth. It is deeper, stronger, purer, than any other.

It cannot be measured, fathomed, or illustrated. It is not exhausted by the advance of years. It dries not up because not reciprocated, but gushes forth when it meets no return. It is innate with her very being, — it glows early and late, — it never tires or decays. It is almost the essence of her very life. And is there no design in this? Why this deep, this unquenchable, inexpressible love, in a mother's heart? O, it is to her maternal care that Providence has intrusted an immaterial, immortal being! Enclosed within these mortal caskets are gems of purest ray — of undying worth. A pearl of precious material is hers to purify, — a diamond of the richest water is hers to increase in brilliancy, — a jewel, designed to deck the Saviour's crown, is hers to guard. Within these feeble ones are the beginnings of undying life, — the buddings of celestial exotics, — the blossoms of paradise. Then, mothers, forget not your duty! When you feel

for your child the warm gushings of affection, remember, God has placed it there to enable you to discharge the important trust committed to you, — to sustain your fainting heart, as it hangs over the cradle of affliction, — to give keenness to that eye which watches the erring footsteps of wayward youth, and fire to those lips which utter a mother's prayer. A holy but responsible calling is yours, and often you feel to convert the poetical effusions of Willis into sentiments and feelings of your own :

“I sadden when thou smilest to my smile,
Child of my love! I tremble to believe
That o'er the mirror of that eye of blue
The shadow of my heart will always pass, —
A heart that from its struggle with the world
Comes often to thy guarded cradle home,
And, careless of the staining dust it brings,
Asks for its idol. Strange that flowers of earth
Are visited by every air that stirs,
And drink in sweetness only, while the child
That shuts within its breast a bloom for heaven
May take a blemish from the breath of love,
And bear the blight forever.

“ I have wept
With gladness at the gift of this fair child, —
My life is bound up in her. But, oh God !
Thou know'st how heavily my heart at times
Bears its sweet burden ; and if thou hast given
To nurture such as thine, this spotless flower,
And bring it unpolluted unto thee,
Take thou its love, I pray thee, give it light,
Though, following the sun, it turn from me.
But by the chord thus wrung, and by the light
Shining about her, draw me to my child,
And link us close, oh God ! when near to heaven.”

CHAPTER III.

“He who directs our fate, disperses oft,
In empty air, the purest wish we breathe
After some golden image of delight,
And sets a labyrinth where we would walk.
Deep in the distance of eternity God sees.”

You will observe, in that never-to-be-forgotten prayer of mother, she added what was seemingly almost a prophetic declaration. After imploring the care of Heaven upon her boy, she added, “when I am gone.” She seemed to feel that soon she should lie down to die; and oh, how fearful was her death! — not of body, for she still lives, a wreck of her former self. Thirty long years have fled since one ray of reason’s sun has darted athwart her pathway, and still an all-wise Providence withholds that precious boon. Calmly and quietly does she now

await her last great change. The turbulent frenzy, which for years controlled her acts, is lulled to a quiet repose; and, with idiotic cheerfulness, she amuses herself with the baubles of a child, or the idle fancies and illusions of the bewildered adult. But how much less saddening this state or species of insanity, than that which seems to leave the light of the intellect dimly burning in the chambers of the brain, while dark shadows have fallen upon the moral feelings and perceptions of the sufferer, and the heart, out of which are "the issues of life," becomes embittered, or filled with vanity and vexation of spirit.

But from either case the mind instinctively shrinks with dread. The historian may describe the decay of empires, the wasting of kingdoms, the falling of diadems, and the desolation of a land swept by war, pestilence and famine; — the poet may image a heart swollen and bursting with the grief

of bereavement, the sighing and wailing of earth, making audible the elastic air of heaven; — nay, the ecclesiastic may portray death itself, in all its gloominess, and in all its dreadfulness; but nothing presents to me so melancholy an aspect as *a mind in ruins!* What a scene! What heart will not revolt at the sight! Reason cut loose from her anchorings; the imagination filled with unearthly images; sensation fled; perception enfeebled; consciousness stupefied; memory obliterated, and conscience paralyzed, and the complicated machinery of the mind taken in pieces and scattered upon the waves, to drift into the unknown seas of an uncontrolled fancy, or lie becalmed in idiocy!

Mind is the glory of man, and reason the glory of mind; but, if divested of this, he is weaker than helpless infancy. The veiling of the sun and the blotting out of the stars would fail to enwrap him in such thick

darkness. But, from its immateriality, and the light which revelation sheds, we learn that mind is immortal, — not subject to the decays of nature, nor capable of being destroyed by the calamities of earth. The shattered fragments of a mind in ruins shall be again collected, adjusted and balanced, by that hand which formed it at first. The body may be decomposed, but the mind survives the wreck. Matter may perish, but mind shall endure.

The ice-bound north, with its crystal cities, may crush the frail body; the entombed fires of the volcano may burst from their caverns, and a fiery sea roll over cities of life; the spirit of the storm may shriek in fancy's ear, and the confused elements join in a requiem over desolation's march; and, as the tornado sweeps on, and the red lightning's wrath adds terror to the scene, and life after life yields to the wild revel of the elements; — though frenzy and despair,

with all their hideous train of concomitants, assume even here the dominion of the mind; — though all these agencies, and ten thousand more, may conspire to blot man from his earthly abode, — mind lives on, vigorous and active, unharmed and immortal as its all-glorious Creator!

We are not always able to connect events with their hidden causes; especially in the phenomena of mind, — it is a substance so subtle, and so intimately and mysteriously connected with that which is material; yet some evidences of the origin of insanity, and other diseases of this principle, are often discernible.

In the case of mother, it was occasioned without any predisposition, produced either by hereditary descent or physical derangement. She had been brought by the power of that Spirit which “enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world,” about four weeks previous, to see herself guilty

before God, — a criminal at his bar, and condemned to death. And by the aid of that Spirit, she beheld a substitute in the sacrifice of the Son of God. With sincere and heart-felt sorrow, she bewailed her offences and guilt; with humble confidence and believing trust, she laid hold on the vicariousness of that substitute, and felt its efficacy in the removal of the burdensome load of guilt which had crushed her to the earth. I was not at home, and did not see the change produced; but those who were familiar with her at the time speak of it as a most blissful transition. Naturally possessed of an ardent, happy and peaceful temperament, — always pleasant and always pleased, — wearing an air of contented cheerfulness, which sat undisturbed upon her brow, — there could not be such an evident change as in some persons; for joyousness was her characteristic. But the beauty of the change was in the sanctification of this

contentment, and the raising of her desires and hopes from earth to heaven. Before, all her happiness was earth-born; now, it savored of immortality. Before, it breathed only the labored and short-lived gaspings of humanity; now, divinity was linked with all its life. Her immortal spirit could no longer feed on mortal's food, though ever so daintily prepared. She felt and knew the contrast between earthly and heavenly hope. Earth-born hopes could, indeed, for a season, alleviate the difficulties of life, and open to view fresh scenes of comfort in the near future; but she knew full well that it lured but to bewilder, and dazzled but to blind, — that it was mortal and must soon die. But now, with Heaven's own aspiring hope, she looked beyond the narrow stream of time. This life was but the outer court her feet must tread to enter within the upper sanctuary; this but the stepping-stone to a glorious immortality; this but the dress-

ing-chamber in which she lays aside the vestments of sinful mortality, and puts on the robe of eternal righteousness. With this blissful prospect, she exultingly and triumphantly gave glory to the Lamb. Never, perhaps, did sinful mortal experience a higher state of holy joy, when first regenerated. But alas! her bliss was of short duration.

The prevailing religion of the day was that system which elects and reprobates the race of man, and which denies every aspiring certainty of acceptance with God. Her experience was of such a nature that she *knew* she had passed from death unto life, and spoke with confident assurance of her change. On being visited by a worthy clergyman, who held the above tenets, she, in the sanguineness of her first love, confidently expressed her acceptance; when he checked her ardor by expressing a doubt of the possibility of this knowledge; and though we

might esteem ourselves among the elect, still we might be among the reprobates.

Her companion, my father, was one of the kindest of husbands and fathers, — lenient to a fault, and kind-hearted to a degree that bordered on unlimited indulgence. He was not, however, a pious or religious man; — one of the world, without God or hope, and whose religious belief was in the universal salvation of guilty man; — and, as is usual with those professing that system, secretly despised the operations of the Spirit of God upon the heart. He gently suggested some few absurdities, as he was disposed to esteem them, in the Christian system, and quoted some passages of Scripture which were to him conclusive arguments in favor of his much-loved theory. Mother was accustomed to esteem his opinion highly, and her affection prompted her to deem his suggestions worthy of attention.

Soon the conflicting opinions of her hus-

band and pastor, and her own experience, became the all-absorbing subject of her meditations, until that peaceful consciousness of believing, confiding trust in the Redeemer, gradually disappeared, and gloomy darkness enshrouded her spirit. Now she contrasted this gloom with the peaceful sunlight serenity which had been her experience a few short days previous, and with the painful contrast came the settled conviction that she was either among the eternally reprobated, or had grieved the spirit of that love which had so mercifully saved her from the ponderous guilt of sin; that that blessed dove had plumed its wings, taken its flight, and left her in the dark; and with this conviction, despair, with its raven wings, brooded over her spirit, and a mental chaos of long, long years succeeded.

And here I might enlarge on the responsible relation of husband and wife. Infinite the influence exerted, each over the other.

Their interests undivided, how natural that a power unlimited over each other's destiny should be coëxistent with their relation ! Then beware how you make the affection you bear the basis of an argument to decoy the soul from God ! Eternity, with all its solemn realities, is often legitimately affected by this relation.

3*

CHAPTER IV.

*"Providence, that ever-seeing eye,
Looks down with pity on the feeble toil
Of mortals lost to hope, and lights them safe
Through all this dreary labyrinth of fate."*

To resume my narrative: this was the last time we ever met in a family group. Home, with all its loved associations and holy joys, was now destroyed. The mainspring of its mechanism was broken. The key which disclosed its treasures was lost. The girdle which encircled it was broken, and all of which it was composed scattered to strangers' homes, to strangers' hearths, and to strangers' hearts. Time wore away, and brought in its course some transient gleams of sunshine and of joy. Childhood, so elastic, could not be strained by sorrow to its utmost tension, and there remain; but,

springing back to its accustomed cheerfulness, brought happiness of an evanescent kind. Homes where abundance supplied the meal, and benevolent kindness sat as master round the loaded table and happy hearth, a kind Providence provided for each sorrowing one. Occasional meetings of two or three of our little group gave a higher zest and keener relish to our pleasures. Some of our circle were adopted by warm and loving hearts, and shared the sympathies of kindly affection and glowing love. Being the elder, and able to earn my bread by daily toil, I never knew again the pleasures of a home. True, I always lived among those who seemed to have a care for the lonely one; but, however pleasant, it was not home. And here I would remark to those who shelter other than their own cherished ones, speak kindly to that heart, for kindness will heal its wounds, and be as balm upon its wounded spirit. Let that golden precept be bound as

an amulet about your hearts: "Whatsoever ye would have others do to you, do ye even so to them." Did you realize, as one who has experienced and felt its power, the veneration, gratitude and love, that will ever be yours, you surely would aim at kindness and considerate care. One who has in a stranger's circle experienced the blessings of a home, will, down to the last hour of life, hold the master of that house in grateful remembrance. If prosperity attend his pathway, and he become, by a kind Providence, among the great of earth, that kindness will be ever in memory's storehouse stored. If adversity be his portion, he will look back to that habitation as one of the greener spots of earth. The retrospect will be pleasing, and the mention of any of that family will send a thrill of grateful pleasure through the soul, and call forth associations of a delightful kind. O! the magic power of kindness, that practical essence of love! A

charm encircles it of brighter halo than all earth's honors. To know and feel the power of kindness is heaven.

“Nought is seen
More beautiful, or excellent, or fair,
Than face of faithful friend, fairest when seen
In darkest day. And many sounds were sweet,
Most ravishing and pleasant to the ear,
But sweeter none than voice of faithful friend,
Sweet always, sweetest heard in loudest storm.
Some I remember, and will ne'er forget,
My early friends — friends of my evil day,
Friends in my mirth, friends in my misery too,
Friends given by God in mercy and in love.”

How lovely is kindness, and how great its benefits upon the stricken ones of earth! Nought else so akin to heaven is dispensed so cheaply, — is so beneficial. It imparts mutual blessings. It blesseth him that gives, and him that receives. Man thrives by nourishing his fellow-man. God has designed that every gift of his should be twice blessed, — that it should circulate through

society, and be elastic as the breath of heaven. And for the encouragement of this virtue, God has established it as a fixed principle in his moral government, that “whatever a man soweth that shall he also reap;” — a principle that may be seen in operation throughout all the circles of society. He who shuts up his bowels of compassion, shall receive no compassion. He who refuseth to show mercy, shall receive no mercy. He that is benevolent, shall reap benevolence; and he that is affectionate and kind, shall reap affection and kindness. O! if this law were written indelibly upon every heart, how soon would earth bloom in paradisaical beauty and love! How soon would the dove of peace hover over and brood the brotherhood of man! Then would sympathy, that connecting link in humanity’s chain, the intimate attendant and twin sister of kindness, lift its consolatory form, and smile to see the blissful change in

our sin-stricken earth. Then could we sing
exultingly,

“ We share our mutual woes,
Our mutual burdens bear,
While often for each other flows
The sympathizing tear.”

Then would Goldsmith cease to be acknowledged a true delineator of friendship's power, when he sang

“ And what is friendship but a name,
A charm that lulls to sleep,
A shade that follows wealth and fame,
And leaves the wretch to weep.”

But the few gleams of sunshine were only precursors of a darker hour, — gleams fitful and transient. Sorrow, and affliction severe, were still mingled in my cup. O! who can tell how little or how much of adversity's bitter dregs is in his portion? Darkness is round about the future, and thick darkness hideth it from mortal's gaze.

The youngest of our flock, a tender bud

of two years' growth, was at the time of mother's derangement adopted by a gentleman and lady of my native town, who had no offspring of their own ; and little George was again blessed with a mother's care, and a father's tender solicitude. How did my heart leap for joy, when I learned how kindly our Father above had provided for the little one, — how, when the rude hand of adversity compelled his father and mother to forsake him, the Lord had taken him up ! My heart's affections clung around this youngest one, and all the tender sympathies of my boyish nature were bestowed upon that fragile flower. He was a lovely boy. I see him now, as in childish glee he dances o'er his play-house ground. His mild blue eye, and raven locks, and snowy brow, and pearl-white neck, — his glowing cheeks, and merry laugh, and lute-like voice, — will never be forgotten. But alas ! the destroyer came, and George was not ! O, had disease noise-

lessly and silently drank up the fount of life — had fever scorched, or consumption wasted, — had friends been permitted to watch the ebbing tide, to see his last sands fall, — then would his death have been more endurable, his fate less sad. But not so : that tender innocent was met by death in a more terrible form. He came in haste, and left a mangled corpse. O God ! why, oh, why this mysteriously tragical end ? A loaded rifle was accidentally discharged by a heedless, reckless boy ; its contents pierced my brother's lovely frame, — he ran, caught the nursery door, — crying " Ma ! oh, Ma ! " — and died !

He sleeps now in the lonely church-yard. His frame long ere this has mingled with its mother earth, and corruption's loathsome form has done its utmost. But is this his end ? is this all of George's history ? does this sum the whole, — that

“ He tasted of life’s bitter cup,
Refused to drink the potion up,
Then turned his little head aside,
Disgusted with the taste, and died ” ?

O, no ! this is not all. George lives in endless life. He has dropped the habiliments of mortal flesh, and been robed in eternal righteousness. He joins now the cherub-choir of heaven. He helps to swell the anthem of the skies. His voice mingles with the holy throng, as in one vast and harmonious minstrelsy the strains of praise and love arise and fill the arched concave of heaven’s eternal dome ; and as the infant church-choir chant the glories of the babe of Bethlehem, he sings a higher note of joy, that so soon his earthly mission was accomplished, and he permitted that blissful choir to join, and freed from earth in glorious rest to spend a long eternity. Loved one, I shed no tears for thee :

“ No, brother, I will not weep,
Though I may greet thee here no more ;

Thy form, now stilled in death's cold sleep,
The grave a sacred trust shall keep,
Till ocean surges cease to roar

“ Before us thou hast found thy rest,
Where nought shall e'er disturb thee more.
In robes of heavenly triumph drest,
And pillowed on thy Saviour's breast,
Thy pains, and toils, and cares, are o'er.

“ A radiant crown bestud with gems
Rests lightly o'er thy placid brow ;
A golden harp of tuneful strings,
Whence melody celestial springs,
Employs thy raptured spirit now.

“ To where the patriarch spirits live,
And near thy unveiled Saviour's throne,
Where beatific smiles can give
All thy immortal longings crave,
To that bright mansion thou art gone.

“ O then we may not weep for thee ;
Our tears shall not invade thy rest ;
But when a few short days shall flee,
We 'll greet thee in eternity,
Among the myriads of the blest.”

Hope is the spirit's anchor, and if dragged
from its moorings, securely rests again in the

visions of a brighter day; and though its resting-place prove a bed of thorns, still it will seek another spot, unwearied and fearless of like fate. Precious boon! sweetener of life's draught, cheerer of life's brightest and loveliest visions! Without thy blest light, gloom and despair would overwhelm our race

“ Amid the ills and woes of life
That here mankind befall,
The wild confusion, endless strife,
The human race enthral,
How cheering is the brilliant star
Which Hope to man has given,
That gleams in splendor from afar,
And lights his path to heaven!
Its lustre gilds misfortune o'er,
Turns darkness into day;
Imparts a joy unknown before,
The joy of ecstasy.

The hope that mother might regain her reason began now to dawn upon us. In fancy, we saw our circle, all but the lost one, gathered around our domestic hearth; a

father and a mother there, and the very fact of its endeared association having been once broken, gave a higher relish to our prospective enjoyment. But fancy paints what reality seldom produces. Father had conveyed mother to the far-famed Hartford Retreat for the Insane; and friends fondly believed she would recover. The maladies of the mind being better understood now than formerly, and more successfully treated, we hoped a happy result. A few months she had enjoyed the kind treatment of her attendants there, when the source of pecuniary means was exhausted. Father, by dint of daily toil, had been enabled to see us all comfortable in our new homes, and to bear the expense of mother's treatment in the asylum. But again were all our hopes blasted in the bud. An accident occurred, by the falling of a load of stones upon his limb, which for many months totally dis-

abled him from labor, and confined him to a bed of torture and of pain.

Reason fled, and he was left to rave in constant torture. For weeks he knew not the face of friends; and months ensued ere he breathed again the open air of heaven. Mother, of course, could no longer enjoy the benefits of that institution, and before the time arrived when father could again labor, she was pronounced irremediable and hopeless; and more, that blessed angel, Hope, had almost forsaken our pathway, and left our companionship.

CHAPTER V.

“Wait the result, nor ask, with doubting mind,
Why God permits such things. His ways, though now
Involved in clouds and darkness, will appear
All right, when from thine eyes the mist is cleared.
Till then, to learn submission to his will,
More wisdom shows, than vainly thus to attempt
Exploring what thou canst not comprehend,
And God, for wisest ends, thinks fit to hide.”

THE reader has now been conducted through various labyrinths in the history of an humble individual, and the mind, perhaps cloyed by the enumeration of misfortunes, like the weary traveller in the wilderness, is anxiously looking for some bright spot to break the sad monotony. I have looked for this many painful years. Sometimes a transient opening has admitted the sunbeams, and made visible a cloudless sky; but again

the closing forest and trackless wilderness have blighted all my earthly hopes.

Onward, then, with a lonely wanderer. You may find instruction and profit in the companionship of the afflicted. It is good to "weep with those who weep," and "it is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting."

I was endowed by my Maker with a strong physical frame, and a constitution that seemed to bid defiance to every destructive agency. But "man in his best estate is altogether vanity." Though he may possess "giant strength, bones of iron, joints of adamant, sinews of brass, and nerves of steel," yet he is cut down as a flower, and withers like the green herb.

On the morning of the 11th of September, 1832, the sun arose in its accustomed glory, and poured a flood of light on all the earth below, resuscitating each plant and flower, and new creating the world, and calling the

busy tribes of men to their duties and enjoyments. With the dawn of that morning, I arose to duty, in usual health, with the exception of a slight cold; but with the close of that day my earthly toil was done. With that setting sun I lay down to rest, no more to till the earth in the sweat of my face;—a heavier doom was mine. While walking the street, in the city of Hartford, I found my strength departing. After completing my errand, I endeavored to return; but, from some mysterious cause, my limbs failed to do their office, and I reeled to and fro, unable to proceed with a walk erect and firm. With some assistance, however, I reached home, where I seated myself as usual, but soon found, to my astonishment, that my arms hung powerless by my sides. After receiving some refreshment from the hand of my eldest sister, — for I could by no means help myself, — I retired to spend a sleepless night, and to go no more from my room, until

borne upon my couch. That night was one of serious reflection and fearful forebodings. But not until morning, when I found myself unable to move a limb, or even to lift a finger, did my condition appear to me in the fulness of its reality. A living being, but dead to all the world. A living body, with limbs that were mere useless appendages. Ah! thought I, as the tears coursed down my cheeks, the fleeting charms of this world are all gone. I am cast forth upon the charities of a cold, unfeeling world. I have a body, every part of which is keenly sensitive both to touch and pain; a tongue that can declare my wants, but no power to supply them. The wheels of time, perhaps, may drag heavily for many years, ere they shall have borne me to the termination of my journey. What dark events, hidden by a wise Providence, the future might disclose to my experience, I knew not. But I must gird myself to the shock, and

“ With firm endurance meet the fatal strokes,
Like storm-scathed hills, or thunder-riven oaks.
These milder sufferings, more enduring woe,
That like Tophana’s waters poison slow,
Bring no excitement, potent to sustain,
Inciting courage, and absorbing pain.
Such is his lot, in fragile frame arrayed,
On whom disease her solemn hand has laid.”

But it was in mercy that kind Providence concealed the future. Had the veil been drawn, and its fearful scenery been opened at once to my view, this frame would have been crushed; — the mind could not have endured the sight, — it must have sunk into despondency, or fallen into desperation.

While multitudes send forth the voice of murmuring and complaint, concerning their unavoidable ignorance of the future, and are perplexed by the darkness in which they are compelled to proceed, and the uncertainty which hangs around the issues of their best arranged schemes, the thoughtful mind, even in this bewildering maze, can trace evi-

dences of Divine goodness. True, it is desirable to short-sighted man to know what is to befall him in life; but were this knowledge granted, were the panorama of the future, with all its fluctuating scenes, spread out before us, it might gratify a vain desire, but it could do no more. Indeed, it would be incalculably detrimental both to the happiness and the usefulness of men. If a series of prosperous events, and a long career of affluence, lay before us, — if our path were strewn with flowers, and our life to be crowned with honors, — a knowledge of the events, and familiarity with the scenes, would lessen the enjoyment they were capable of affording. The lover of the wild scenery of nature gazes upon towering mountains, and projecting cliffs, and deep ravines, and thundering cataracts, with stronger emotions of grandeur and sublimity than the dweller among those scenes. And why? To the one they are familiar,

and to the other new and strange. Thus are we less and less prepared to appreciate the blessings allotted to us, just in proportion to our previous knowledge of them, and as they come upon us more and more as matters of course.

If, on the contrary, we could see the way of our pilgrimage strewed with thorns, — if our cup were filled with bitterness, — we should be unmanned and enervated by the knowledge, — become unable to tread our dreary pathway, — to endure the weight of affliction, or to discharge the duties of life.

How perfectly disqualified would Job, that upright and patient servant of the Most High, have been, had he known the calamities that awaited him! His heart would have melted like wax; and like Belshazzar while in the midst of his revelry an armless hand wrote his doom upon the wall, the joints of his loins would have been loosed,

and his knees would have smote one against the other.

Though we may long to know the future, and strain the eye in fruitless endeavor to scan its occurrences, yet it is the great truth, that we know not what to-morrow shall bring forth, that nerves to vigilance and energy, and makes us pains-taking and parsimonious to-day.

It is in mercy that Providence has dropped the veil, and intercepted the view, disclosing events only to momentary experience. And as disclosed, if these events are calamitous, ignorance of the future leaves ground for hope, which sustains under them. If prosperous, the uncertainty and fleeting nature of earthly things—the conviction that our joys may be transient as a sunbeam, fleeting as a shadow that departeth, like a changing cloud, a gorgeous illusion, a mist on the mountain side—is eminently calulated to promote humility, the fairest, loveliest

flower that grew in Eden, and to cultivate a sense of our entire dependence upon the Great Disposer of all events.

That man may be properly disciplined, and escape both despondency and haughty insolence, these two ingredients are intermingled in our cup, and concealed there by a hand of wisdom and of love. Each is alternately preparatory to the other, and our blessings are valued in proportion as they are conferred unexpectedly, and after the heart has been stricken with sorrow.

The weary and parched traveller drinks of the cooling fountain with a keener relish than the dweller in the fertile vale. The tempest-tossed mariner treads the earth with a higher sense of enjoyment than the man who was never rocked upon the heaving billow. Health is infinitely more desirable after a season of infirmity and pain, and spring is vastly more lovely after the gloominess and dreariness of winter : — thus prov-

ing that our joys are enhanced by the sorrows we experience, and by the uncertainty that hangs around us.

“It is good,” then, that the afflicted believer “should both hope and quietly wait for” deliverance. It is for him, through grace, to acquire the marvellous power of rejoicing in tribulation, and, inspired with an unwavering trust in God, to adopt the language of Habakkuk, “Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be found in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields yield no meat; the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation,” — “knowing that our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are

temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

After being thus reduced to a state of utter helplessness, I resorted to remedies. The most eminent physicians were called, and exhausted all their skill; but were baffled in every effort to ascertain the cause or to remove the disease. For more than eighteen years, there has remained a perfect and total paralysis of all the muscles of volition. A slight motion of the head and body is all that could be produced. Finding that my case was desperate, and bid defiance to the whole system of “*Materia Medica*,” I endeavored to be composed and resigned to my fate. I now began to think seriously of my spiritual condition, and to throw my thoughts forward into a vast eternity, and inquire concerning my probable destiny.

CHAPTER VI.

“Child of the promises! dry up thy tears;
Fly to the cross with all thy cares and fears;
Beneath the droppings of Christ’s precious blood
Lay down at once thy murmurings and thy load.”

THUS far the reader has plodded with me through my earthly pilgrimage. My body, frail and feeble, has occupied your attention. But now the time is come to lift the spirit’s veil.

Being a homeless wanderer, my eternal interests were little cared for by others; and often I felt keenly the neglect, and was led to say, “No man careth for my soul.” True, I regularly attended the ministration of the word, before my disability, in the Old South Church, in the city of Hartford; but the sermons were of such a nature, so much

of worldly wisdom, and so little of that pathos and earnestness that attracts and interests the uncultivated mind, that they were to me a mere form of words. The ceremonies of the house of God were all unmeaning, and their only object, to observe with decorum and respect the so-called Sabbath of the Lord. But, one Sabbath eve, I wandered into an obscure prayer-circle. I listened with amazement. The prayers there offered were the faithful exhibits of earnest hearts. Here I felt that there was something possessed by this humble band that formed my ideal of genuine piety and holy zeal. I saw and realized that a mere formal round of ceremonies and devotions was not all that constituted religion; but that there was life and power in it sufficient to arouse the dormant energies of a sinful soul, and cause it to wake to holy joy and spiritual life. It seemed that a new era had dawned in religious matters; for I had never heard

of things on this wise before. Such interest in each other's state, such union of loving hearts, and, withal, such unaffected simplicity! I felt that the days of primitive Christianity had come back to earth. And then, such appeals to those who knew not God, blended with affectionate, sympathetic entreaty, — such a delightful exhibit of the pleasures of religion, in contrast with those of earth, — of the joys of heaven, and the miseries of banishment from God, — I never heard before. My heart was not the only one that melted under the Spirit's influence. I returned from that meeting — but not to sleep. That night I offered my first prayer to God. In deep contrition of spirit, I bewailed my ingratitude and sin. The goodness of God passed in solemn review before me, in contrast with my unholiness and guilt. I realized his providential care in preserving me to that hour, and lamented my ungrateful and disobedient course. In

sincerity I recorded my vows, and resolved upon a course of holiness and devotion, fully determined to seek until I found the pardoning favor of God. But, alas! my impressions were as the early cloud and morning dew. I feared the face of clay, and dared not declare my intentions by coming out from the world and forsaking its pleasures. Gradually these impressions subsided, until I sinned as oft as before, and as prayerless lived. This was the first direct and powerful influence of the Spirit upon my heart. True, I had felt often to yearn for more substantial good, for something that could fill the soul. Each fondly anticipated good, when obtained, was unsatisfying, and was soon thrown aside like the useless toy of a child. Everything for which I panted, when realized, was as a changing cloud, a gorgeous illusion, a bubble in the wave. Pleasure lured, and I gayly danced along its flowery way. Business and ambition beckoned, and

I became thoughtlessly absorbed in their perplexities. But each left me insatiate and annoyed. Often, when viewing the works of nature, and admiring the beautiful scenery of the noble Connecticut's lovely vale, would a stillness, a sadness, settle down upon my spirit, as gently as the waving of a harvest-field by the soft zephyrs of a summer's eve, soft and genial as the coming of morn, that would not wake an infant from its slumbers; and I would involuntarily sigh for the waters of the river of life, and desire to be led by the good Shepherd into holier, lovelier scenes. And then, when the wild elements revelled as if intoxicate with wrath, — when the red lightnings glared and the thunder rolled, — when the tornado swept on, and the oak crashed upon the mountain, — a terror seized upon my frame lest the thunders of Divine wrath should leap upon me, or the lightnings of vengeance devour me. But so blinded and ignorant was I,

that I little thought these to be the visitations of the Spirit of grace, — that when this pensive sadness pervaded my soul, it was the whispering of the Holy Spirit, saying, Come, seek substantial good, that which will embody, exceed and satisfy, all that is ideal; — come to the waters of life; come, and peace, like a river, shall be yours, and joy unspeakable and full of glory. I knew not that, when filled with terror at the wild revel of the elements; that it was God's voice speaking in thunder-tones to come away from that place of danger, to seek shelter in the Rock that was cleft to take me in; to come where torrents never flow, where lightnings never play or thunders roll; but where peace, tranquillity and love preside, and where eternal sunshine settles on the soul.

Years fled, and sad changes were wrought in my physical frame. The sorrows of my early youth were nought to this. Even life itself was rendered burdensome, and I longed

to die. Do you wonder at this, dear reader? What was life to me, since all its active scenes were as though they were not? For, henceforth I was to be an invalid;—more than this, the power of locomotion was forever gone, and I compelled to sit in the same position the remnant of my days.

The hand of God in this I now distinctly see. O, how do I adore the riches of his grace in employing any mode of operation to secure my eternal good! Perhaps never should I have known my sins forgiven, or felt his blood applied, if affliction had not thus been my portion. Surely it has been to me a blessing in disguise! and I now am enabled to say, through grace, “The cup that my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” But I anticipate.

About three years after I lost the use of my limbs, and when hope had almost fled concerning my recovery, I bethought myself of God. Hitherto I had been reckless and

complaining, caring for nought but returning health, dependent upon others for every temporal blessing, and no source within of peace and comfort. O, wretched state! Destitute of the pleasures of earth or religion, why is life prolonged? Better lay me down and die, than drag out such a miserable existence. The eternal future I cared not for,—no future condition can be more wretched than this;—and more, when life's lamp flickers in its socket, and is extinguished by the blast of death, there shall be an end of all my sufferings, and I conducted to the mansions of the blest, for "Jesus died the world to save." "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Thus, you see, I had imbibed, while in health, the belief of my father, that all men are unconditionally saved. For months I repined and murmured against God, and considered him unjust. According to my own theory, that

punishment was confined to this life, that it always follows immediately the commission of sin, I certainly must have been of all sinners the chief; for none were so afflicted. The inquiry would often arise, What have I done to merit punishment so severe? I knew I had not obeyed all of God's commands, but I had never been openly wicked or profane. The bacchanalian revel, or inebriate's bowl, was not my resort. The violator of God's day, or the profaner of his name, were not my companions. I considered myself at least tolerably moral and upright. Now, here was a problem for me, as a Universalist, to solve, — to reconcile my creed with my own condition. Again, I looked upon the world, and some, who were unrighteous, flourished as the green bay tree. Earth's treasures showered into their coffers, and they had all that heart could wish; while others, who were devoted and pious, pined in poverty and neglected

solitude. The more I meditated, the more fallacious my doctrine appeared; and soon I turned to see what was written in the law and testimony. A frame was prepared directly in front of me, and by holding a pointed wire between my teeth, I was enabled to turn the leaves, and thus read the oracles of truth. I was induced to read, to beguile the tediousness of the hours; but more strongly, that I might arrive at truth,—for my soul panted for a reality of good. I commenced the Bible by course, and before I had finished, I came to the conclusion that

“ The sinner must be born again,
Or feel the wrath of God.”

When this was settled, I looked to the hills whence strength cometh for help. O, how earnestly did I pray for the Holy Spirit's influence, to soften and subdue! for as yet my judgment only was convinced. No ray of hope beamed from the skies, and for

weeks I groped in impenetrable night; but still I prayed, and groaned, and agonized. The word of God I diligently and prayerfully read, in connection with other works. The writings of Josephus were to me witnesses of the truth of the word of God; and I derived some consolation from the fact that I had arrived at the fountain of truth, though its efficacy and power had not been felt upon my heart. Fox's Book of Martyrs was next perused; and oh, in eternity I shall rejoice for its blessed effects! Hope began to dawn. I felt there was a power somewhere that could remove the load of guilt and sin from my burdened heart,—that there was something that could cause me, even in deep affliction, to rejoice. I was conscious that the elements of happiness were in one's own bosom, and not necessarily dependent upon circumstances. If the worthy martyrs could rejoice in prospect of death in all its horrid forms,—exult

in sight of fire and fagot,—triumph in full view of every imaginable invention of torturous death,—glory in tribulation under the fatal blade, and amid the curling flames,—surely these light afflictions of mine are endurable. My sorrows are not like their sorrows, nor my grief like theirs. I am only trammelled in body, and that too by one who has a right thus to do; but I have the free use of religious liberty to serve God according to the dictates of my own conscience,—while by men they were deprived of this. Let tyrants fether my body;—let it be torn in pieces by wild beasts,—let the rack, and fire, and all the instruments of suffering combined, be put under contribution,—but give me the free power of yielding to God acceptable service, and mine is the better portion. And now I thought that the same power that was given to them could be imparted to me,—for God is no respecter of persons. Cheer up, my soul!

“ Give to the winds thy fears ;
 Hope, and be undismayed ;
God hears thy sighs, and counts thy tears,
 God shall lift up thy head.
Through waves, and clouds, and storms,
 He gently clears thy way ;
Wait thou his time, — so shall this night
 Soon end in joyous day.”

About this time, a few pious young men of the village where I then resided came weekly to my room, and held prayer-meetings with special reference to my case, which, under the blessing of God, were instrumental in leading me to the Fountain of Life. Soon I was enabled to see light begin to dawn, and it gradually brightened until I knew that the Sun of Righteousness shed his benign rays upon my heart, and I felt the transforming influence. Now, I rejoiced in tribulation, and saw distinctly a Father's hand in all my pathway, guiding and directing, that I might be brought to this blessed state. Thus has the heavenly

gardener dug about me, a withered, barren fig-tree, until at last the effects are seen. But oh, it has been costly digging ! It has cost me all earth's pleasures and enjoyments, — the loss of limbs, and the loss of health ; but what are these in comparison with a knowledge of sins forgiven, and the approbation of Heaven ? Not worthy to be compared. “ Bless the Lord, oh my soul, and forget not all his benefits ! ” Since that blissful hour, I have been enabled to rejoice in prospect of constant disease, infirmity, and a premature death, and in anticipation of receiving a crown of glory when permitted to lay aside these vestments of mortality. I am confident there is as bright a crown for those who suffer, as for those who do his will. Most cheerfully, then,

“ I'll suffer on my threescore years,
Till my deliverer come,
To wipe away his servant's tears,
And take his exile home.”

At times my heart has wandered; but God has kindly chastened, and I have been brought again to give him my best affections. O, the goodness and mercy of God, in using such varied means to bring us back to his embrace! And now I am waiting for my hour of dissolution, when this earthly house shall be taken down, and I shall be borne on seraph's wings to mansions of bliss!

Although comparative bliss was now my portion, still I had not suffered all God's righteous will. A scene of deep affliction was again allotted me. My father had borne for twelve years the weight of grief occasioned by mother's insanity, and the scattering of his household, with fortitude, and had ever been a kind father; sympathizing with us in our sorrows, and rejoicing in our prosperity. But at length, a downcast and dejected man, he came to his end by drowning, in the town of Manchester,

Connecticut. In a few short weeks after this, the youngest of my two sisters sickened and died, leaving a husband and little one; and shortly after, the other sister was carried to the tomb. The remains of one rest in Glastenbury, and the other in Feeding-Hills, Mass. Both I hope to meet again in heaven. O, yes; there will be a reünion! Blessed thought! Even now I see them sweeping the golden harp, and hear them swell the anthem of praise to the glorious Redeemer!

The Bible has taught me to be patient in affliction; and grace has strengthened me to endure "as seeing him who is invisible." I have learned to "rejoice in the Lord always;" to "let my moderation be known unto all men," and to feel that "the Lord is at hand." I have been instructed, from the blessed volume of truth, to "Be careful for nothing; but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, to let my

requests be made known unto God," conscious that "the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep my heart and mind through Christ Jesus." Thanks be to God, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound; everywhere, and in all things, I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me."

After despairing of recovering my strength, I placed myself under the instruction of stern *necessity*; and found her to be indeed "the mother of invention."

I have stated that, by means of a frame attached to my chair, and placed in a proper position before me, I was able to read, turning the leaves with a pointed wire. I soon found that by laying a slate upon the frame, I could use a pencil, and form letters or

figures. With this facility, I commenced the study of mathematics, and prosecuted it with success, hoping to realize some pecuniary aid, to supply my immediate wants; but in this respect I failed. It afforded me, however, ample pleasure and satisfaction. It relieved the monotony of life, and tended to discipline the mind to close application, so that to this day I feel its effects in the power, feeble though it may be, to concentrate thought.

I next applied myself to the science of music. I had ever been a lover of music, both vocal and instrumental; but not an adept in either. The depths of my soul have often been stirred while listening to the solemn organ's peal, and the chant of voices tuned to praise. Nature had bestowed a deep bass voice, so that I longed to become a proficient. I succeeded so far as to enable me to read very readily any composition, however difficult; and often has my soul

exulted, while, I trust with the spirit, and with the understanding also, I have sung the praise of God.

I next discovered, that by holding a pencil between my teeth, I could write on paper, arranging my manuscript with the pointed wire attached to my teeth, by means of a cord drawn between them, by which it was suspended when not in use. I soon attempted to use a pen in the same manner, and by diligent application for nearly a year, succeeded in being able to write legibly.

Having thus far overcome difficulties that seemed utterly insurmountable, I now conceived the idea of writing a little book, and at once addressed myself to the work. Slow and tedious has been the process; but the result is now before the reader, accompanied with the earnest desire that the author may prove a sun of consolation to some of the afflicted ones of earth.

CHAPTER VII.

“O what am I, that I should dare arraign
Thy righteous dealings, Judge of all the earth?
A rebel and transgressor from my birth, —
Conceived in sin, — the heir of wrath and pain,
What cause have I to murmur and complain,
When thou art pleased to smite? For hadst thou dealt
In righteous judgment, I had long since dwelt
In that abyss where prayer itself, t’ obtain
The slightest mitigation of my doom,
Were unavailing. Let me rather praise
Thy patience, that thou dost not yet consume
So vile a wretch. O no! Thy word of grace
Assures me that the deepest wounds I feel
Are given in mercy, — not to slay, — but heal.”

“God moves in a mysterious way.” If
we attempt at all times to trace his provi-
dences, we find that “clouds and darkness
are round about him,” and from the midst
we hear a voice saying, “What I do thou

knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." However insatiable the desire for knowledge which God has implanted in the human breast, it is the evident intention of its Author that it should not be gratified to its utmost extent in the present state of being. Though it may ascend to the very footsteps of the eternal throne, yet there it is stayed by the glory of him that sits upon it. Every subject that passes before the mind is to a greater or less extent involved in mystery, and utterly beyond our comprehension. Everything that we know brings with it something that we cannot know. The systems of nature, of grace, and of providence, are replete with enigmas. Nature's varied scenes are spread out before us, illustrative of the wisdom, power and goodness, of the Creator; and conduct us, in our contemplations, up to "nature's God." "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork;

day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge;" but at the same time mystery enshrouds all its essences, and intercepts our inquiring zeal. "The minute and the vast are alike inscrutable. We can no more comprehend an insect than we can grasp a world. After all the investigations of the wise, they have gone but a few steps beyond the vulgar. A true philosopher will say, in the language of one of the brightest ornaments of the philosophic school, 'All that we know is, that we know nothing.'" Nature, indeed, distinctly points out to us a God, but she will reply to none of the inquiries which curiosity may dictate. She says to reason, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no further."

Doubtless, every fact, agent and operation, in the natural world, has its design. The heaving of the ocean and the uncapping of the mountain, the rumbling of the thunder and the lightning blazing across the heavens,

these mighty agents and events, and the minute too, that are scarcely observed by the contemplative mind, are not without a purpose.

“The zephyr playing with an aspen leaf, — the earthquake
that rendeth a continent ;
The moonbeams silvering a ruined arch, — the desert wave
dashing up a pyramid ;
The thunder of jarring icebergs, — the stops of a shepherd’s
pipe ;
The howl of the tiger in the glen, — and the wood-dove calling
to her mate ;
The vulture’s cruel rage, — the grace of the stately swan ;
The fierceness looking from the lynx’s eye, — and the dull
stupor of the sloth ; —
To these, and to all, is there added each its use, though man
considereth it lightly ;
For Power hath ordained nothing which Economy saw not
needful.”

And even Revelation itself, which profess-
edly makes known to us the deep things of
God, reveals facts, but does not pretend to
explain the theory of those facts.

“The Christian’s faith had many mysteries too.
The uncreated holy Three in One ;

Divine incarnate ; human in divine ;
The inward call ; the sanctifying dew,
Coming unseen, unseen departing thence ;
Anew creating all, and yet not heard ;
Mysterious these, — because too large for eye
Of man, too long for human arm to mete.”

How it is that the invisible spirit of the Most High enters the heart of man, and accomplishes its work, “creating it anew in righteousness and true holiness,” is only thus explained: “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth. So is every one that is born of the spirit.”

The most accomplished sceptic and the most deep-read infidel, while they may cavil at the revealed system of Christianity, cannot pretend to account for it or to comprehend it in all its length and breadth; and the most deeply-experienced and learned believer, while his soul triumphs in the belief of the Christian scheme, is constrained

to confess that it is too wonderful for him. He can comprehend neither the love that prompted, the wisdom that conceived, or the power that executed it. Not that it contains anything contrary to reason, but it is far above, and extends infinitely beyond, reason.

But the mysteries of Providence very far transcend those of nature and of grace. There are, indeed, evident marks, that God, "who sitteth upon the circle of the heavens," "ruleth among the children of men;" but from our incapacity to understand the whole system of his government, we are often involved in perplexity, and the voice of murmuring and complaint is heard concerning the Divine dealings. But our perplexity is all to be attributed to our ignorance of the ways of the Lord. To attempt to penetrate the mystery, and understand all the deep and sacred designs of the Almighty, is but a vain attempt of a finite mind to grasp the Infinite, — to comprehend the incomprehen-

sible, or to fathom the fathomless. The great reason why Providence does not appear to pursue a regular and consistent plan, — why virtue is not always crowned with temporal prosperity, and vice invariably attended with temporal misery, — is, that God has to deal with an ungrateful and rebellious race, and at the same time govern them as moral agents. There are, indeed, palpable evidences that God approves virtue and intends a reward; that he disapproves vice, and designs punishment. These evidences are to be traced both in our physical frame and in our mental nature. The blushing cheek, the tremulous and abashed eye, the trembling hand, and convulsed frame, are indexes of the guilt that exists in the heart, and are designed to betray the offender. The brow calm, the eye serene, and the frame composed, are designed as marks of innocence, which God has affixed to the physical system.

In the mind God has erected his own tribunal. He has placed conscience there, in its high office of observing all the actions of men, and all their thoughts and motives, and endowed it with the marvellous power of uttering its voice so as to be heard above the din of the human passions, consoling the upright with its approval, sanctioned by the Most High, and infusing gall into the sweetest cups of the offending and rebellious, upbraiding them with remorseful reflections and fearful forebodings of coming vengeance.

But while this is admitted as rational and consistent truth, there are many isolated events which appear to be exceptions, and from which the conclusion is drawn by the superficial observer, that chance rules the world. These instances are those in which the wicked are allowed to prosper in the things of this world, until "their eyes stand out with fatness, and they have more than heart can wish," while the virtuous and

devoted are compelled to repine in indigence, and mourn the absence of the blessings of Providence. Criminals often escape undetected and unpunished, while the heaviest calamities fall upon the innocent and unoffending. The wicked live many years, to execute their plans of evil, while the righteous are often cut down in the midst of their career of usefulness, or adversity blights their fairest prospects, and consigns them to obscurity and suffering. Virtuous youth, and helpless, harmless infancy, are by no means shielded from the relentless hand of the destroyer. Earthquakes and floods, famine and pestilence, are commissioned to sweep away indiscriminately the innocent and the guilty. The unoffending infant is selected by the destroyer as his victim. In his iron grasp it writhes and groans, but writhes and groans in vain. It lifts up its infant wailing, but the foe has no heart to feel. Its pensive moan and bitter

complaint, together with fond parents' tears and prayers, are alike disregarded. At length the fragile frame yields to the stroke, the labored breath grows short, and yet shorter still; the dimly burning taper that lit its cherub face is extinguished, and the lovely innocent is no more. Is it because of the sins of the sufferer, that a righteous Judge has permitted this? No; it has committed no sin; it has not known good or evil. Though God, in this instance, has acted as a ruler, yet has he "held back the face of his throne, and spread his cloud upon it."

We see next a lovely and vigorous youth, flushed with hope, and full of cheerfulness and joy. He has been the object of parents' solicitude,—a father's counsel and a mother's prayers. Mental and moral culture have been bestowed without measure. He is qualified for the highest stations of influence and usefulness. With this high endowment

he goes forth, his glad heart beating with the throb of enthusiasm as his eye rests upon the whitened fields all ready for the harvest, which he hopes, with the Divine blessing, to gather into the garner of the Lord. But to-morrow that foot-tread ceases to be heard. That large heart has ceased to beat. Those bright prospects are vanished. That spirit, that panted to bring souls under the dominion of Christ, has taken its flight, and there is left only a mass of mouldering clay. Contemplating the event, we are constrained to confess that the Governor of the universe is a "God that hideth himself." — "Clouds and darkness are round about him. His way is in the sea, and his path in the great waters; his footsteps are not known."

These events are mysteries, that no wisdom, however profound, unaided from above, can solve. But with the light of revelation, and with the history of the past before us, we may rationally conclude that they are

not controlled by caprice, — that they are not left to roll on by mere chance, neither occasioned or permitted by one who is regardless of men, or who rules as a tyrant.

Vain man would be wise. He would choose his own path. But if allowed to do so, though the path of his choice might be strewn with flowers, and the blessings of his selection innumerable, he would inevitably be ruined. We are strongly inclined to pray ardently to be delivered from affliction ; and yet the Scriptures reveal affliction as necessary, that we may be properly disciplined for that world where affliction is no more. We are so ignorant of ourselves, and of the circumstances that surround us, that we know not what to ask at the hand of the Lord, or what will in the end prove a blessing.

By reason of his ignorance, what an error was committed by Lot, when he chose for his residence the plain of Jordan, because it

was well watered, even as the garden of the Lord; which was afterward overthrown for the wickedness of the inhabitants, and he lost all his possessions, together with the partner of his youth, and himself and daughters narrowly escaped! How little did Jacob, though so pious a servant of God, know, when he said of the providential arrangement by which his household was to be sustained in the years of famine, "All these things are against me!" How ignorant was Elijah when he fled from Jezebel, and requested for himself that he might die, — Peter, when he would have dissuaded the Lord from suffering, — and the disciples, when they would have called down fire from heaven to consume the city of the Samaritans!

And hence, because of our incompetency, the Lord has graciously reserved the selection of providences with himself. "In the hand of the Lord there is a cup; it is full of

mixture, and the wine is red. He poureth it out." He imparts favors as we can bear them, and afflictions, disappointments and bereavements, as they are necessary for our correction, reproof and profit. The great reason of the mystery connected with providential occurrences is, that we know only in part. We trace only here and there an event; and not being able to know its design, or its connection with other events, it is a total mystery. If a complicated piece of machinery were taken in pieces, and scattered to the four corners of the earth, and a traveller, ignorant of the whole, were to take up a separate part, not knowing its design, the relation it sustained to others, or the power it was designed to exert over others, it would be perfectly mysterious to him. But, let the scattered parts be collected and placed in their proper position before him, and allow him then to see the whole in operation, and the mystery will be developed.

Thus with the events of providence. We find them separate and alone. We see one lifted up, and another, equally virtuous, cast down; and we can by no means solve the mystery. But could we cast off the darkness that enshrouds us,—could we rise to some eminence above the capacity of finite beings, and, with an eye that could comprehend all things, see as God sees, and understand as he understands,—we should discover that, with the wisdom worthy of a God, he is controlling the universe;—we should be constrained to adore the wisdom and the ways of God,—“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God;—how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!”

It is obvious that the present is a state of probation,—that God does not ordinarily punish sin immediately upon its commission, nor reward the deeds of virtue as they are performed. And if we were not left in a

measure ignorant of the Divine ways, no room would be left for the exercise of faith. Knowledge would take its place, and we must necessarily be deprived of the rich reward which is bestowed upon him who trusts in His word.

God designs that his mighty working should produce an effect, not upon a single individual merely, nor even a single generation — but that each event should be felt in coming ages, down to the close of time.

How little did Abraham know of God's wise and merciful design, when, after declaring to him, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called, and in him shall all nations of the earth be blessed," he issued the command, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the mountain of Moriah, and offer him up there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains that I shall tell thee of!" And it was not until, in obedience to the command, he

had ascended the mountain, and built an altar, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood, and lifted the knife to slay his son, that the mystery was in any measure developed. Tracing it as an event of history, we can now see the grand design. It was to prove that patriarch,—to call out and exhibit the power of his faith for the benefit of the world.

How little would the world ever have known of the extent to which patience might be exercised in affliction, had not God permitted Job to fall into the hands of his enemy, and caused the account to be recorded for our instruction! We learn the power of faith to triumph over all calamities from the numerous instances recorded in the Scriptures of the ancient worthies, “who, through faith, subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire,

escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens."

Murmur not, then, at the dispensations of providence! If the wicked are left to prosper in their wickedness, — if "they are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men — if their pride compasseth them about as a chain, and violence covereth them as a garment," — go with David into the sanctuary of the Lord, and understand their end. Know thou that with Dives they are receiving their good things, and are permitted to prosper in this life, that, despising the riches of Divine grace, their ruin may be more conspicuous, and their end more terrible; — while it is in the season of the deepest affliction that God is pledged to be with the believer, to deliver him, and honor him. It is then that he finds cause to break into the song, "It is good for me that I was afflicted; for the

Lord will command his loving-kindness in the day-time, and in the night his song shall be with me."

This is a subject which, for many years, that I have spent in solitude, has occupied my thoughts. I have learned wisdom by the things that I have suffered. I have learned to bow submissively under the hand of God,—to reverence his ways,—to acknowledge the supreme authority of his word; and to adore where I cannot comprehend, and to wait patiently for eternity to break the seal, disclose mysteries, and open to the eager gaze that book which will ever be unfolding the providential dealings of God. O, that History of histories, which records what wonders God has wrought, to keep men back from the pit, and conduct them to himself!

Then I may learn that a kind mother was bereft of reason here, that she might be crowned with glory hereafter; that she was

suffered to live a wandering maniac, that the proud hearts of sons and daughters might be humbled;—that the tender bud of glory was violently cut down, that it might not drink in the pestilential miasma of earth, and bear the blight forever; and then by angels was borne home with joy, to shed its fragrance in heaven. Sisters were stricken down, with some wise design, that I shall then understand. And as for myself, I shall learn, as I now feel, that God has dealt mercifully with me. I refused to walk in his ordinances, and he came and paralyzed these limbs, that I should not walk at all upon his footstool;—I would not employ my hands in his service, and he smote them like the barren fig-tree, that, withered and shrivelled as they are, they should not be employed in the service of sin. I lifted my puny arm against the authority of Heaven, and powerless it fell, to be lifted no more. I refused to yield

obedience to the commands of God, and the storm of vengeance was gathering, and the clouds of wrath were marshalling themselves, to pour their furious artillery upon my head forever; and the hand of the Lord was laid upon me, that I might be bowed down under it, until the storm of danger should pass over. My mental and moral powers were left unharmed. Bereft of all other, and made to see and to feel my feebleness, these I consecrated to God;—poor and unworthy the offering, but it is all I have, and God requires no more. Now, “I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to his care unto that day.” Let the turbid waters of affliction roll high, and let their angry billows dash and break around me,—let the storms of adversity come down and beat in all their fury upon my head! My anchor is within the vail; and, through grace, I shall not be moved.

And if, by slowly rolling years, "this earthly house of my tabernacle be dissolved, I have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

When I think of the scenes through which I have passed, my heart saddens; but hitherto God hath sustained me, and I have abundant reason to magnify the riches of his grace, and to adore his matchless wisdom, in bringing exiles home.

The future is full of pleasing anticipations, and images more lovely than fancy can paint. They are opened to view by revelation and grace. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for those that love him." I see a fond and affectionate mother, clothed in her right mind, and bearing the image of the heavenly; an infant brother, walking by the "river of life," and causing the atmosphere of heaven to tremble with his songs

of praise; I see sisters, clothed in white, and plucking "ambrosial fruit that grows on life's fair tree;" and all the members of a severed family that have been renewed by grace, and endure to the end, shall meet again; the family bond will again be united. He who hath scattered shall send forth his angels, and gather his saints from the four corners under heaven. "Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven." Then shall these dormant and paralyzed limbs feel the flow of vigor and of health, and through grace, I shall, with an elastic step, walk the streets of the Holy City, and, with the multitude that have come up through great tribulation, cause heaven's high dome to ring with the melody of the exalted and triumphant song, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his

Father; to him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever! Amen."

" I bless thee, Father, that thy breath has given
Existence unto me, a broken reed ;
That, midst the griefs by which life's ties are riven,
Thou hast bestowed me strength in time of need ;
Thy hand upheld me when my heart was fraught
With griefs that wrung my full heart to the core ;
Though I perceived not, 't was thy hand that brought
The " balm of Gilead " to the festering sore.

" I bless thee, Father, for the sunlight streaming,
Like golden showers, on forest, hill and dome ;
And for the blessed stars, like watch-fires gleaming
On heaven's high walls, to light us to our home
And for each little flower that lifts its cup
Of gentle beauty through the emerald sod,
Sending its perfume — Nature's incense — up
Unto thy throne, I bless thee, oh my God !

" I bless thee, Father, for the light which shineth,
Clear and unbroken, on life's rugged way —
A ray from thy pure throne, which ne'er declineth,
But ever brightens till the perfect day ;
That thou hast taught my heart to be content —
My weary soul to suffer and be still —
A pilgrim I, who patiently must wait,
Till I have done on earth my Master's will."

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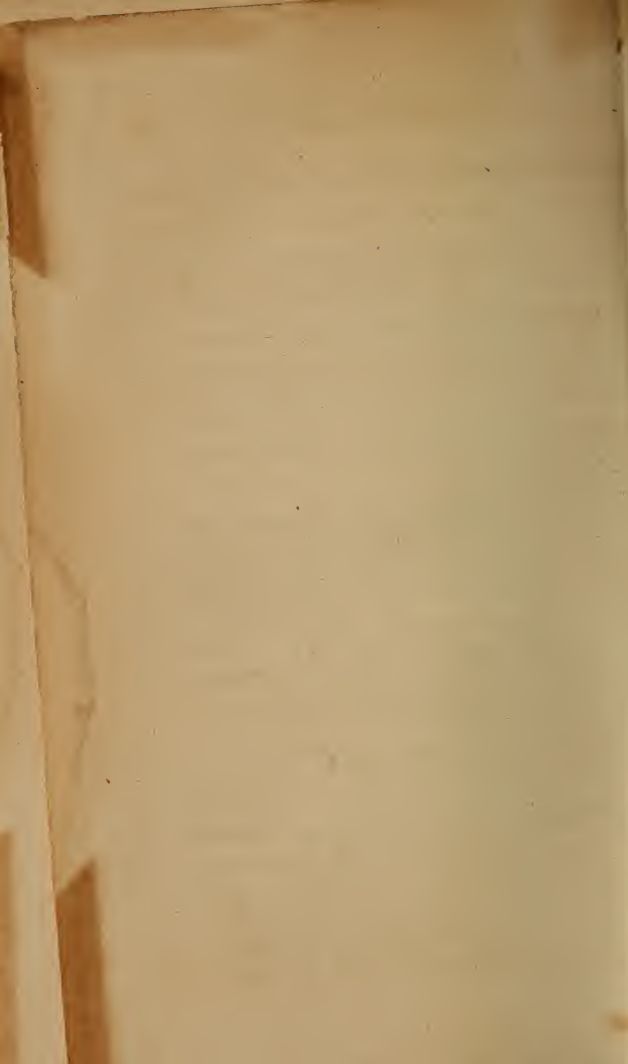
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